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[A LADY PATRONESS.]

VERA'S VENTURE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"So Fair Her Face," &c., &c.

CHAPTER X.

"YOU WILL NEVER BE TROUBLED WITH MY POOR COUSIN, MR. DELAMERE."

For 'tis a truth well known to most
That whatsoever thing is lost,
We seek it ere it come to light
In every cranny but the right.

BELTON LEICESTER went with his friend to see the interesting case in the workhouse. He looked at it in a professional light altogether, and in the hurry of Mr. Nash's business, for that much-wanted gentleman scarcely seemed to have a minute to breathe, he heard no more than the bare outlines of the case.

He learned that the young woman had been taken out of the river, and that the injury to her head was the result of a blow in falling into the water. But he gathered, or thought he did, that it was somewhere close by that she had been found, and had no idea of the journey across the river that Mr. Snadgett and his wife had taken. She was quite sensible when he saw her, and able to talk, and it seemed that Mr. Nash's notion about her having mentioned the name of Rivera was all a mistake—her name was Esther Morton.

She was very weak, but she answered all the questions put to her readily enough. She had

done nothing to be ashamed of, she said, and she had fallen into the water by accident, having missed her way in the dark. She was a seamstress and quite destitute, and was very thankful for the shelter and care that had been bestowed upon her.

Her case was really a very interesting one. The operation had been a delicate and difficult one, and Mr. Nash and the more experienced surgeon who had operated were justly proud of the success of their handiwork. Esther Norton became quite a person of interest, and benefited in many little ways by the excitement there had been about her. Charitable ladies came to see her, and seldom left her without giving her some little token of their sympathy and interest. She was very grateful for all the kindness shown her, and was not at all reticent about herself. She knew nothing of her parentage, which accounted for her lonely condition. She had been brought up by the parish, and had picked up her living how she could since she was of an age to care for herself.

She had a taste for sewing, and the matron of the workhouse, which had been her only home till she went out to service, had taken a fancy to her and taught her several kinds of work. For the last three years she had supported herself by her needle, but work had failed her lately, and she had been obliged to sell everything she possessed to buy food. Her landlady had refused to keep her any longer, and she had been seeking for some place to spend the night in, when the accident happened that deprived her of her senses.

It was a glib tale and glibly told, but it was a little too pat some of the people who heard it thought. She was very humble in demeanour

and exceedingly well behaved, but she seemed so entirely above the life she had described herself as leading that Mr. Nash was puzzled.

He had too much to do to give much time to fancies about his patients, and his interest in Esther Norton rather died out as she got quite well and able to get about again. He never even heard that she had made a complaint about certain papers which she declared herself to have been robbed of, and which no one in the workhouse had ever seen. She had them in the bosom of her dress, she said, and the stitches had been cut and the place sewed up again.

No one in the workhouse knew anything about it, and she could hear nothing of Molly Snadgett. She had no money to prosecute any search after her, and, to tell the truth, very little notice was taken of what she said about it. The parochial authorities have something else to do besides attending to the trifling complaints of those whom they help to food and shelter.

Esther Morton left the workhouse, and it was understood that one of the ladies most interested in her had procured her a situation somewhere, and Mr. Nash and the authorities at Shadwell saw her no more.

Belton Leicester thought a good deal about her. There was something in her face that had interested him very much. It was the face of no common woman—there were strength and purity in it, in spite of the untoward circumstances under which he saw it. The eyes that looked out at him from under the bandages and trappings of the dresser's arranging were powerful—full of life and intellect, and the hands were well shaped and white.

"That woman has a history," he said to him-

self as he jotted down a memorandum of the case for his own future benefit. "I think I shall hear of her again."

But all he did hear was that she had left the workhouse and gone her way into the world again, and after awhile Esther Morton went out of his head as completely as if he had never heard of her.

" You will never be troubled with my poor cousin, Mr. Delamere."

" Have I no other name, Nellie?" and Neville Delamere drew the sweet face nearer to his and pressed a kiss upon it. " Whatever makes you call me 'Mr. Delamere' in that serious fashion?"

" Because it is a serious thing altogether, and I don't quite see what will be the end of it."

" The end of what?"

" Of all that has happened."

" Meaning Miss Mildred's inopportune discovery and the row with your venerable aunt?"

" You are not to talk like that about Lady Rivers, she is not an old woman."

" Judging by her power of tongue and her extreme interest in other people's affairs, she ought to be a hundred. Well, I'll say 'respected' then—is that a better word? Is it the row with her that makes you call me 'Mr. Delamere' all at once? I can tell you what will come of it, Nellie dear."

" What?"

" Our speedy marriage without any of the fuss that there would have been over it if discovery had come about later. I am very thankful that Miss Millie did come in that way, though it was rather awkward."

" I am not glad, it was horribly embarrassing. But that was not what I was going to talk about, Neville dear."

" Ah, that's right, put 'Mr. Delamere' away for occasions of ceremony. What was my darling going to say? or rather what am you saying? You began your oration with some intelligence about your cousin, or the person who calls herself so, and to whom I don't wish any harm, but whom I should like to consign to the bottom of the nearest river."

" Why? you don't know her."

" No, but you want to make her acquaintance, and to bring her here to come between us. I could not stand it, my darling, and so I tell you plainly."

" You won't be asked to—she is dead."

" Dead!"

Some strange, sick feeling seemed to take hold of Neville Delamere as he echoed her single word. The room reeled round with him and he turned hastily away, lest she should read in his face the tell-tale emotion all too visible there. The very mention of her cousin seemed always to upset him, and she took a letter from her pocket and handed it to him.

" This morning's post brought me that," she said; " it seems true, and if it is, it is a miserable ending for her, poor girl—it has made me feel quite ill."

It was a letter from the house doctor of an hospital in Hertfordshire, and was startling, to say the least of it. Neville Delamere read it with much surprise and no little satisfaction. He had always dreaded the introduction of this cousin whom Nellie was so anxious to take to her heart and home, and he knew full well that when his wilful little ladylove chose to do anything she was not easily turned from her purpose.

" Hadley Hospital, Sept. 4th.

" MADAME,—I think I am, right in addressing you as the person to whom the enclosed papers should be forwarded. I am ignorant whether you are the Miss Rivers therein spoken of, but I see that your father's name occurs more than once. I had some business transactions with him many years ago, and so am acquainted with his name and address. The enclosed papers, which I presume belong to you or some member of your family, were given to me by a woman

who died here under my care last week. I know nothing of her except that she was the wife of a bargeman and was brought to this place battered almost out of all semblance to humanity by her drunken husband. There was never any hope of saving her from the first, but she retained her senses nearly the whole time until she died. She told me distinctly that the packet was taken from the person of a drowned woman, whom I understood her to say that she and her husband had fished out of the water. I fancy they must have had many experiences of that sort from the way she spoke. She distinctly said the woman was dead.

" I trust I have not made any mistake, or trouble you for nothing, and have the honour to remain, madame, yours truly,

" GRAHAM CLINTON.

" Miss Rivers, Milverstone Grange."

There could be no sort of mistake. The papers referred to Vera, and there were two or three letters of the late Sir Darcie to his brother amongst them. Notably the one in which he promised to help and succour his brother's orphan child. She was dead then, for it was not at all likely that she would suffer such important documents to go out of her possession. The doctor had made one little mistake in his narrative. He had told Nellie that the woman had distinctly said that the girl was dead. Molly, for it was herself, poor woman, who had gone to the hospital to die, had said "drowned," a term always used by her class in speaking of anyone who has been in the water.

Her differences of opinion with Bill had come to an end at last, and he had given her that "one knock too many" that he was always threatening her with when he had taken more drink than was good for him.

He was woefully penitent, as soon as the effects of the vile rum with which he had sodden himself had passed away. He would have given his own life to have brought back the one that was oblong fast, and to hear again the voice that had been wont to give him such hard words enough in reply to his curses, but which was raised now only to beg all about her "not to hurt Bill."

" He didn't do it, leastways he didn't mean to," was her pitiful plea; I aggravated him."

Woman like she would have shielded him to the last, but he had been seen to commit the crime and they carried him off to gaol after her deposition had been taken. The society which he graced would hear of him no more for a long time and the Saucy Susan would be saucy no more under his command. Molly was buried and there was no one to tell whether her story was true, but Nellie believed it at once.

" I shall go to this place," she said to Neville, " and see this doctor. He may be able to tell me more than he has said in his letter."

Nothing that Neville could say could dissuade her from the expedition, and he was on thorns till she came back again and told him how she and Mrs. Carrington had seen the writer of the letter, but that there was nothing more to tell. The woman and her husband were both gone, and he had no idea what part of the country they had been in when they found the drowned woman they spoke of.

If the papers were Vera's, she was certainly dead, and Nellie mourned over the mischance that had delayed the letter from her which would have sent her to her aid.

" Darling, you could not help it," Neville Delamere said, when she bemoaned the fact to him, " you did all you could, depend upon it it was ordered for the best."

And Nellie came to believe that it was after a little time, she had other things to occupy her, and though she would have been very glad to have helped her cousin and taken her to her heart, she could not be expected to mourn very deeply for some one she had never seen. She put the letters safely away, and turned her attention to the one great event of her life, her marriage with the man she loved so dearly and so blindly.

CHAPTER XI.

THE VICAR AND HIS WIFE.

A man he was to all the country dear.

PEOPLE were very apt to say that the real vicar of pretty little Springfield was Mrs. Deacon and not the reverend gentleman whom the bishop had ordained. She was decidedly of the order of strong-minded women, and strong bodied too, for she could endure much more real fatigue than could her less robust husband.

Her detractors declared that she ordered the subject of the straightforward discourses that were preached from the pulpit every sabbath, and pointed the sting when the cap fitted any particular person, as it very often did, for Mr. Deacon was not the man to let any sin slip by, and had an uncomfortable habit of saying, "Thou art the man," with very little veiling of his meaning to any one who had strayed out of the straight path.

He was very much liked for all his plain proprieities. " Parson's bark be worse than his bite," was the verdict of his humble friends, and if he lashed Bill Snooks or Dick Long in church on Sunday till those worthies felt inclined to proclaim themselves the sinners under dissection by rising and walking away, he was always ready with help and comfort for their miserable wives and children whom a blank Monday in which there was nothing to eat came for them.

The vicarage was the resort of all the ailing and impetuous pair of the place, and Mrs. Deacon, though she scolded her protégés unmercifully, helped them judiciously as well, and had their best interests at heart.

She was proud of her position, good lady, with an innocent pride that hurt nobody, and she was proud of her husband, who was as handsome as he was good, and, as she was fond of saying, was a man to do a woman credit when he was dressed and smartened up. She took all the credit of his appearance to herself, and indeed a great deal of it was due to her, for the good vicar was somewhat careless in his habits, scrupulous almost to a fault on the score of cleanliness, but not caring much whether his outer clothing was smart or shabby so it was whole and decent.

Mrs. Deacon was a thorn in the flesh to all the women and girls in the parish who were given to flaunting themselves in feathers and flowers. She loved dress herself, but there was a difference she said. It did not become labourers' daughters and small farmers' wives to be aping their betters and parading cheap finery copied from her and Miss Rivers before the eyes of their rustic swains.

Her eye was quick, and she marked a new bonnet or a bright-coloured dress in no time, and the discovery was sure to be followed by a visit and a lecture.

A few Sundays after the public announcement of Nellie's projected marriage with Neville Delamere, she was in her place at church as usual. Autumn was well in now, and the winter dresses and bonnets were coming out, and Mrs. Deacon was exercised in her mind as to who had new ones and who would make their old ones last them another season. She had plenty of opportunity, for the lessons were very long, all about the doings of some of the Old Testament heroes whose wickedness is so puzzling to ignorant minds when held up as an example.

Mrs. Deacon knew the lessons by heart, and looked round her with critical eyes.

" Ah! I thought so," she said to herself. " There's Betsy Jones in a new bonnet, and a copy of mine, I declare. I might have known what would have come of Samuel giving that man all the money at once for those frames. Of course that ridiculous woman must go and spend half of it directly."

Poor Betsy had done nothing of the sort. She had sinned in that she had copied Mrs. Deacon's bonnet as far as she was able, but she was a deaf milliner and she had made the offending article herself and for the most part out of materials she already had in the house.

" And there's Susan Jennings with a red

merino dress." Mrs. Deacon emphasised to herself, looking farther round the church; "she ought to be ashamed of herself. And, ah, Mr. Delamere, I can see you making game of Samuel. What she can see in you I can't think."

SHE was pretty little Nellie sitting by her lover's side in the Milverstone pew and looking like a fresh, fair flower in her innocence and beauty.

Mrs. Carrington was with them to play propriety, and the eyes of more people than the vicar's wife waned their way pretty often.

She was wrong in supposing that Neville Delamere was thinking of her Samuel, as she called the vicar. He was lost in a maze of thought, the uppermost of which was gratification at the near prospect of his marriage and consequent release from his debts.

In less than six months from now Nellie would be his wife and he would be a rich man in right of his bonny bride.

Her lawyer and her friends were tying up the property pretty stiffly and he would not be able to do as he liked with all the revenues of Milverstone, but there would be enough left to free him from the most ravenous of the tribes and to give him a standing among the county people.

He saw the vicar's wife looking at him and he sent back a defiant look in the direction of her pew.

"Spiteful old cat," he muttered, to himself; "she'd like to oust me if she could, and I should like to—well, if murder was not quite so risky I am afraid I should try my hand on her."

Mrs. Deacon's eyes, in search of offenders in the gown and bonnet line, or of inattentive boys or girls, lighted upon a fresh object of consideration.

"Who is that woman?" she asked herself, "I have never seen her before."

A young woman, very plainly dressed in black, with a close, old-fashioned bonnet on and a veil, an article of wearing apparel that she had very nearly succeeded in driving out of the parish as far as the poorer class were concerned. Veils were almost universal then; they were the fashion, and as sure as she saw one Mrs. Deacon set herself to procure its immolation.

"What did honest girls want to hide their faces for?" she demanded of the culprits, none of whom dared venture to hint that she covered her face with costly lace when she went abroad, while they only aspired to such poor imitations of it as came within their means.

The stranger had a veil on, very plain, but worn with the air of a person accustomed to such things. It was very thin, and through it the lady could see that the girl, for she seemed no more, had dark hair, brought low on her forehead in a mass, the features were good and the eyes dark.

She could see that much, and she fell into such a reverie of wondering that the sins of the Israelites came to an end and the choir had started their singing and found her still seated.

She started to her feet in some confusion, for she was usually the leader of the congregation in all matters of church discipline, and she caught a smile on the face of the reckless Neville Delamere that made her lose her head altogether and begin her share of the singing on a false note.

"I'll make him smart for his insolence yet," she muttered. "Why, that must be the strange woman's voice!"

A clear, powerful voice was rising above the rest of the congregation, and singing the music with a precision and skill that made the choir seem unequal and imperfect, and, glancing round again, Mrs. Deacon saw that it did belong to the young woman she had noticed.

She went home wondering and interested and without having heard a word of the very excellent sermon she had induced her husband to preach on the text of feminine vanity.

"Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning," etc., had been the burden of the vicar's discourse, and a right good sermon he had preached on it, but it might have been all about something else as far as his wife was concerned.

"What did you think of it, my dear?" he asked, after they reached home.

"It was very nice," was her ready answer, "but I don't think I heard much of it."

And then she poured into his patient ear, as she always did, her troubles regarding the finery and Mr. Delamere's insolence, and her wonder as to who the young woman was, and all the rest of it.

"I don't wonder you did not hear much of what I had to say," he replied, laughing, when she had exhausted her catalogue. "Your time must have been entirely taken up. Why should you worry yourself so much what the folks wear? Let them alone; and as for Mr. Delamere, I think you are mistaken. He is a careless young fellow and has no reverence for religion or respect for the church, but he is a gentleman and would never so far forget himself, I think. You are prejudiced against him, you know."

"I know that. I hate the idea of his marrying Nellie."

"So do I, but we cannot undo matters, and we had best not speak of them. Nellie has chosen for herself and I hope with all my heart that we may be mistaken."

The good couple felt towards Nellie as if she were their own child, and her proposed marriage had estranged them sadly.

Neville Delamere seemed to usurp all her time, as, indeed, he tried to do. He was always fearful that someone or something would step between him and his good luck, and he knew the disfavour in which he was held at the vicarage.

Mrs. Deacon went to church again in the evening, but the young woman with the beautiful hair and the offending veil was not there, nor could she learn anything about her from the few she inquired of; she went home feeling as if she had had the trouble of dressing for church all for nothing, for it was not always her habit to go of an evening.

The next morning she was busy with her accounts, part of her weekly duties which she never neglected, and by means of which she contrived to drive her cook to the verge of distraction, when the parLOUR-maid entered.

"Well, Lucy, what is it?" she asked, without looking up.

"A person wishes to see you, ma'am," Lucy replied.

"I don't see anyone at this hour," Mrs. Deacon said, sharply. "I have told you so often."

"Yes, ma'am, I know, but she said her business was urgent, at least that was what I understood."

"And who is it, pray?"

"No one from hereabouts, ma'am, she is a stranger."

"Did she give no name?"

"Yes, ma'am, she said her name was Esther Morton, but that you would not know her."

"Esther Morton?"

"That was what she said, ma'am."

"I have heard the name, and very recently too," Mrs. Deacon said, "but I cannot recall where; what does she want, Lucy?"

"I don't know, ma'am."

"Then ask her."

Lucy went and returned, saying that the young woman said she wanted to speak to Mrs. Deacon and would not tell her what about.

"Show her in then," said the lady, somewhat snapishly, "I suppose she will hang till I do see her; these common people have no sense in that respect, they think one's time is at their service any hour of the day."

Her face wore its very severest look—and she could look very severe when she chose—as the unwelcome visitor entered, but it changed to an expression of astonishment when she saw that the pertinacious person who would not take no for an answer was the girl who had excited her curiosity in the church.

"You wished to see me?" she said, as the visitor hesitated.

"Yes, madame."

The voice was musical and rich, singularly so, and the manner of speaking refined, and the whole appearance of the young woman graceful

and ladylike—evidently no common person, this fair-haired stranger.

"What can I do for you?"

"A great deal, I hope, if you will," was the singular answer. "I am come to ask your help, Mrs. Deacon."

There was nothing in the least servile about her, she spoke almost as if the vicar's wife were her equal, which made her next words sound strange and unnatural.

"I have come really to ask your charity, madame, for it is little else."

"Charity?" and Mrs. Deacon drew herself up, "anyone in the village could have told you that I have my times and ways of dispensing alms. You should have told my servants your business and they would have known what to do."

"I do not want help of that sort, at least not yet," the girl replied, with the utmost composure; "what I want is work, Mrs. Deacon, and I think, perhaps, you can get me some to do."

CHAPTER XII.

THE NEW SEAMSTRESS.

Base envy withers at another's joy,
And hates that excellency it cannot reach.

MRS. DEACON looked at this fearless young woman in some surprise. She was not used to being accosted in this fashion and to have things demanded of her in so summary a style.

"I am not in the habit of finding work for everyone that comes to me without a recommendation," she said, haughtily. "What employment I can find for deserving people"—and she laid a sufficient emphasis on the word "deserving" to let her visitor understand that she was by no means sure it applied to her—"is of course given to those I know and can recommend; you are a perfect stranger to me."

"I am aware of all that, madame, and I have brought my credentials with me," the young woman said, quietly, in a well-bred tone that somehow provoked the vicar's wife by its very gracefulness and propriety. "I came to you because I wish very much to get a living in this part of the country, and because the lady who recommends me to you told me that there was a great deal of plain and fancy needlework going on in your village just now, and that there had been some difficulty in getting hands to do it."

"That is true, though I do not quite understand how anyone came to know it, at any rate how you did."

The fact was just as the stranger had stated. Nellie had for some reason of her own—a senseless fad, Mrs. Deacon declared—elected to have all the lingerie in her trousseau made at home and in the village. Her wedding should give employment to her own people, she said, and she persevered in her idea in spite of all the remonstrances of her aunt, Lady Rivers, and the sneers of Millicent.

Both these ladies declared that Nellie would have nothing fit to wear, that she would be a perfect guy, and make herself the laughing-stock of the fashionable world, etc., but their arguments all went for nothing.

Neville was not going to marry her dresses but herself, she said, and if people were ashamed of her in articles that her own people had made, why they need not come to her wedding, that was all.

Lady Rivers and her daughter had no intention of staying away from the wedding, so they took the hint and held their tongues; but they never ceased to deplore Nellie's perverseness, and to prophesy that the trousseau in course of preparation under her own eye and the superintendence of Mrs. Carrington would turn out a grand failure, and all have to be replaced by something newer and more fashionable before the honeymoon was over.

There was no need for apprehension on that score.

Nellie had a delicate and refined taste in lingerie, and no West End house could have turned out daintier or more exquisite work than

that which was being done under her own superintendence at Springfield.

There was a dearth of hands, for though it wanted six months to the time fixed for the wedding, there was a great deal to be done, and Nellie wanted it all in good time.

She was not going to be worried about unfinished work in the last few days of her old life, she declared—and only the very Saturday before Esther Morton applied to Mrs. Deacon she had been making inquiries for someone to do some very delicate embroidery and fine stitching.

It was rather odd that this girl should turn up in the exact nick of time, as it were; but her explanation of how she came to know that workers were wanted was simple enough.

"A lady called Mrs. Blennerhasset, living somewhere near here, I presume," she said, "wrote to the principal of St. Mary's Home, Stepney—you know it, perhaps, madame?"

"I have heard of St. Mary's home, yes."

"Asking her if they had anyone there at that time who could do what was wanted. There was not anyone in the house—there has been a great demand for young women in nearly every capacity lately, and a great many have emigrated as well—and Mrs. Cattermole, the wife of the clergyman there, kindly gave me a letter of recommendation to you."

She laid the letter on the table as she spoke "with the air of a duchess," Mrs. Deacon declared when she told her lord and master of the interview, and waited calmly while she read it—it set forth that the writer, who was a clergyman's wife well known and widely respected, could thoroughly recommend Esther Morton as a clever and quick seamstress, that her faculty for doing the kind of work which had been spoken of as wanted at Springfield was remarkable, and that furthermore during the time that she had worked at Stepney she had been a very well-conducted young person and was respectful and obliging.

"I don't think her respectful at all," Mrs. Deacon thought to herself, as she read the letter; "there's a hoity-toity, I'm-as-good-as-you sort of way with her that I don't fancy. However, that has nothing to do with her sewing. But why did she come to me? If Mrs. Blennerhasset wrote about it, why did she not go to her?"

Esther Morton was ready with her explanation of this matter also.

The lady's letter had unfortunately been destroyed in a mistake she had been told, and she had been recommended to go to the vicarage and state her business—she did not know where Mrs. Blennerhasset lived.

"Anyone in the village would have told you," Mrs. Deacon said, with some asperity.

There was something so cool in the young person's proceedings altogether that she was exasperated with her without having any actual reason for finding fault—she was perfectly respectful, and yet seemed somehow to put herself on an equality with the vicar's wife, and she had always been accustomed to have people abase themselves before her, till she had come to think herself a very great personage indeed.

"I am afraid I have made a mistake in coming to you, madame," the girl said, guessing at a great deal of what was passing in her mind, "it would have been better, perhaps, if I had gone direct to the young lady herself, and have spared you the trouble."

"No, it wouldn't," was the sharp answer. "Miss Rivers has enough to do without attending to all the people that come to the place looking for work. How are we to know that you are the person described in this letter? It may be a forgery."

"Mrs. Cattermole bade me refer anyone to her if there was an difficulty, madame. I have worked for her these three months, partly in her own house and partly elsewhere."

"She took you into her house?"

"She was not afraid to do so, madame."

There was something defiant in her tone, and Mrs. Deacon could bear it in silence no longer.

"I don't think you will suit for what is wanted here," she said, snappishly. "Your manners

are anything but pleasant, and I am accustomed to much more humility from those who are seeking for employment."

"I am very sorry if I have given offence," Esther Morton said. "I had no intention of doing so. I did not hand you these specimens of my work with the letter, I should have done so. But if you are not satisfied with my manners, it will be little use introducing them to you."

She laid them on the table as she spoke, and Mrs. Deacon saw they were the very things that were wanted, and much as she would have liked to ring for her servants to turn the audacious Esther Morton out of the house, the sight of the beautiful work restrained her.

"This work is very nice," she said, "but I must know a little more about you before I can recommend you to Miss Rivers for her work."

"You shall know all there is to tell, madame."

The all was not much. She was told exactly what the doctor at Shadwell had been told, viz., that Esther Morton was a foundling brought up by the parish, and that she had supported herself by her needle ever since she had been of an age to work for her living, and that she had been on the verge of starvation from the want of work when she met with the accident which had led to her introduction to the kindly wife of the Stepney clergyman.

There was not much in the history, but simple as it was Mrs. Deacon did not believe it.

"She did not get those airs and that refined way of expressing herself from any parson teaching," she said to herself. "If I get the work for her I must keep her under my own eye and watch her pretty closely. I don't half believe in her."

The end of the application was that Esther Morton, who had lodged for the past two nights at the house of a ploughman in the village, whose wife had made room for her for a consideration, was bidden to take up her abode with the parish schoolmistress, a protégée of Mrs. Deacon's, who would as soon have tried to fly as dared to object to anything that lady proposed, and was supplied with work.

Mrs. Blennerhasset was charmed and gloried in the result of her letter to the home, though they had been careless enough to lose it and send the girl to Mrs. Deacon, whom the good lady already thought a little too officious in meddling with Nellie's preparations, and Nellie herself was delighted, and took the new seamstress into her good graces immediately.

"You never saw such lovely work as she does in all your life, Neville darling," she said to her betrothed one day when they were walking through the village, "and she's such a striking-looking creature. I should like you to see her."

"My darling, I don't take any interest in sewing women."

"No, perhaps not. But this Esther Morton is so nice; she seems quite like a lady, and she has nice hair, and—"

She broke off with a little sigh, for she thought her lover strangely quiet and apathetic. Generally he made a point of extreme interest in every word she uttered. He could hardly have told himself why the subject of this seamstress was distasteful to him; but it was. He wished Nellie would talk of something else. But Esther Morton was uppermost, and she would go on with her chatter about her.

"She has beautiful hair and dark eyes; they look almost black sometimes," she said, "and she seems to take such an interest in her work. I have half a mind to have her up at the house."

"My dear Nellie, pray do not do anything of the sort."

"Why not?"

"Because you don't know anything of her. She may be a very good needlewoman, but an utterly unfit person for you to take to your arms in that way."

"I'm not going to take her to my arms, only to give her one of the servants' rooms on the third floor, and let her work there. There are so many little things I want done that I never think of at the proper time, and she would be

the very person I want to do them. There she is at the window. Isn't she pretty now?"

Neville Delamere looked in the direction in which Nellie's glance went, but he saw nothing except a head bending over some work. Esther Morton, looking up, saw him.

A white, set look came into her face, and her hand shook.

"Are you ill?" the schoolmistress asked. She was in the room when Miss Rivers and her lover passed.

"No, I'm a little tired, I think, stooping over the work. There is Miss Rivers outside. I suppose that is the gentleman she is going to marry."

"Yes, that is Mr. Delamere, and a lucky fellow he is too. He hasn't much money of his own, and Milverstone Grange is no bad place for a man to step into."

"No, indeed. And I suppose he is as good as he is handsome."

"Well, I don't know," was the somewhat hesitating reply. "There have been some very queer stories going about, all about what he has done before he fell in love with Miss Nellie. She won't believe a word of anything against him, bless her, and I hope for her sake they ain't true."

"Love is very blind," Esther Morton said, with just a little scorn in her voice. "I hope Miss Rivers may find him all she thinks him. She is coming this way, Miss Jones, will you open the door for her, please?"

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A NEW ELEMENT.—Professor Scaochi, the mineralogist and crystallographer, describes in a Belgian contemporary, a new mineral, to which he gives the name of "Vesbine," found by him in a yellow incrustation formed on certain portions of the Vesuvian lava ejected in 1861. He considers vesbine to be a vesibate of alumina, and vesbic acid as the oxide of a new element, "Vesbin."

FACILITIES FOR FORGERY.—It certainly seems strange that those most interested in preventing forgery should apparently be so indifferent about taking advantage of the protection which might be afforded by scientific knowledge. There can be no doubt that paper can be so prepared chemically as to render it impossible to eradicate the writing upon it without leaving unmistakable traces of its having been tampered with. It is clear from recent trials that in spite of great losses and costly and constant warnings no adequate attempt to do this has yet been made. These disclosures add to the knowledge and confidence of the forgers, and thus increasing temptations are thrown in the way of criminals, who too often escape detection, but for whose prosecution and support when detected and convicted the country is saddled with heavy and long-continued expenses, which should properly be chargeable against those who neglect to protect themselves and the public by availing themselves of the ordinary precautions which common prudence dictates and science would render so easy.

THREAD FROM WOOD.—The manufacture of thread from wood for crochet and sewing purposes has, it is said, recently been started at the Aby Cotton Mill, near the town of Norrköping, in the middle of Sweden. The manufacture has arrived at such a state of perfection that it can produce, at a much lower price, thread of as fine quality as "Clark's," and has from this circumstance been called thread "à la Clark." It is wound in balls by machinery, either by hand or steam, which, with the labelling, takes one minute twelve seconds, and the balls are packed up in cardboard boxes, generally ten in a box. Plenty of orders from all parts of Sweden have come in, but as the works are not yet in proper order there has hardly been time to complete them all. The production gives fair promise of success, and it is expected to be very important for home consumption.



[A MOUNTAIN HEBE.]

THE MAID OF MUHLEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAID OF MUHLEN.

The light of love, the purity of grace,
The mind, the music breathing from her face,
The heart whose softness harmonised the whole,
And, oh, that eye was in itself a soul.

"A HEBE bearing her flagon up the Olympian heights? Eh, Wycliffe? Is not the Maid of Muhlen the impersonation of Canova's Statue in the Green Vaults?"

"Rather a flesh and blood Artemis, with her bold, free step, and that great deerhound trotting at her side."

Leonard Westcott laughed and said:

"She is that Maid of Muhlen I saw and heard about on that chamois hunt of mine up here two weeks ago. Neither is this the first glimpse I've had of her to-day. As we passed the bakehouse half an hour since, when our diligence first arrived, I saw her in there, her arms bared and flaked to the elbow, with some delicious German compound of flour and milk. She has a model arm I tell you, smooth and glossy as satin."

"You are an incorrigible Bohemian, Leonard. I cannot appreciate your predilection for bake-rooms and servant girls."

"That girl," cried Westcott, indignantly; "that girl is no more a common servant maid than you are one of the white-gloved, swallow-tailed gentry of the continental table d'hôte. She is the Fraulein Von Boeck, a niece of the prior in the monastery we passed about a mile below this. The old priest has a sort of parsonage connected with the monastery, where she has spent nearly all her life with him in abstruse studies."

"Pray then what is the prior's niece doing in the bake-room of an hotel?"

"Oh! she's taking a finishing-off course, you know, in the culinary mysteries under our fat

hostess. Frau Schnellwind it seems is a famous brewer and baker, and the Fraulein is anxious to excel in cookery as well as in Latin and Greek."

"Athena, Diana, and Hebe combined!"

"Don't sneer, Lawrence; you've caught the trick since you've been crossing swords with Miss Lanier, but the expression is unsuited to the classical cut of your features."

Lawrence Wycliffe smiled, turning back in his promenade across the verandah of the Alpine hotel, where he and his friend were stopping with the other diligence passengers to take dinner.

The two had finished their meal, eating hurriedly, and had left their fellow passengers still at table whilst they repaired to the verandah to smoke.

Wycliffe walked restlessly to and fro, a feeling of impatience possessing him, for he was looking for the arrival of a carriage which their diligence had passed some miles back on the road to St. Moritz.

Leonard Westcott, the artist, was lolling over the balustrade also smoking, and gazing at the amphitheatre of peaks, snow-crowned and towering into the clouds, that rose round and above him.

From these his gaze had descended to the lower summits, which were yet clad in autumnal mists, and then to the village with its quaint buildings, the ancient chapel with its stone pagoda-like bell tower, the vicinage folk busy at their rustic tasks, the goats and other domestic animals cropping the scanty herbage from crevices and crannies of the cliffs, and, enveloping all, the prophetic greyness and bleakness of the atmosphere hanging on the skirts of the heavy rain-fall that impended over the hills above.

"If you will take a good look," said the artist, "at this Fraulein Von Boeck you will see, Lawrence, how inappropriate the word 'servant' would be applied to her. Nature has done

for her all that art has accomplished for your Parisian belle, Louise Lanier."

"You are prejudiced, I see, against Miss Lanier, Leonard, and a trifle bold, moreover, in the expression of your opinion."

"I thought the agreement between us when we left England was to speak out when either was in danger of yielding to temptation."

"You think, then, that I am in peril from Miss Lanier."

"I am sure, Lawrence, you are at this moment on the look-out for the coach and four that our diligence passed at Sylva Plana Lake this forenoon. Nor do I believe that Madame Lanier will spare her steeds. She is determined to overtake us I am sure before our diligence starts. She is an intriguing old French Creole, and knows, as you do, of the landed principality of your father in old England."

"That does not prove Louise Lanier an accomplice in her mother's plottings. She seems to me as artless as she is beautiful."

Leonard shrugged his shoulders.

"There is such a thing as being artlessly artful. Miss Lanier is, at least, marvellously au fait in the ways of the world. My advice to you, anyhow, is not to walk into her snares blindfolded."

"You talk like a greybeard, Leonard. But doubtless I shall not have occasion to apply your advice soon, as Miss Lanier and myself will hardly meet again before the winter season in Paris, and there one encounters so many temptations that temptation itself grows ineffectual."

"We shall see. Ha! yonder comes madame's coach now at full speed. Don't you see the gleam of the canary-coloured panels? Put on thick armour, my friend. The pursuer is at hand and there is no city of refuge near."

Wycliffe laughed, but coloured a little.

"Look to your own safety, Leonard, my boy," he said. "There is possibly less danger for me in the Lanier wiles than for yourself in the country bloom and virgin freshness of your Frau-

lein Von Boeck. See to it that she does not have you kneeling at the toes of her clogs before the diligence is ready to start. Your lady-mother would be loth to tolerate a daughter-in-law addicted to sauer-kraut and *lager* beer, combined with Alpine verdancy and independence of action. The Fraulein doubtless graces the bakers' room of Muhlen, but not the less *entre* might she and her deerhound appear in the drawing-room of La Belle Rivière."

Westcott suddenly held up his hand in warning.

Wycliffe, following the direction of his glance, saw that the subject of their conversation had approached within hearing distance.

Indeed the path from the fountain wound around the hill until it led directly parallel with the verandah, and in this near proximity to the speakers Else Von Boeck was walking briskly, bearing, lightly poised upon her head, a large pitcher of water, which she was carrying to the Frau Schnellwind.

It was no unusual office she was performing. The good Frau had done many deeds of kindness in behalf of the motherless girl, and the latter was ever eager to requite them.

She consequently felt no hesitation at continuing her course, although she had seen from the path lower down the two travellers on the verandah by which she would have to pass. In truth, she was hurrying back from the fountain to aid the dame in attending her guests, as her waitress, Lisabet, was off on an errand to the upper milk pastures, and the diligence passengers were usually exacting, because hurried.

She would probably have gone on her way without further noticing the two young men if she had not been attracted by the sound of her own name.

Westcott looked at her curiously as she passed, but it was impossible to discover from her face whether she had heard Wycliffe or not.

Wycliffe remarked, with a queer flutter of his heart, as he too looked at her, that the earnest eyes were turned, not upon his friend, who was nearest her, but upon himself.

She had evidently heard his words. But had she understood?

He hoped not, as they had been spoken in his own tongue, and this Maid of Muhlen doubtless knew but few dialects beyond those used in the familiar intercourse of the Alpine villages. Even should she have a smattering of Latin and Greek, as Westcott affirmed, it was hardly likely she should have a familiar acquaintance with English.

Meantime the travelling-carriage had turned into the court-yard, and he hurried, us in duty bound, to greet the new comers. But the clear, beaming glance of the Alpine maid haunted him as he went. He saw still her erect and graceful figure, her elastic step, the poise of the throat and head, the blonde fairness of her skin, the peachy bloom of her cheeks—all heightened by the becoming costume she wore, that was in material and style modified but a trifle from the picturesque peasant garb of the Swiss chalets.

"A Hebe she is in truth," he confessed to himself, "and upon my word, if she does wear clogs in midwinter, her feet and ankles in those buckskin gaiters have the symmetry of Cinderella's own. By Jove! Westcott is lost this time if our diligence is detained at Muhlen; and our driver told me a wheel was out of order and would have to be bolstered up for the rest of the journey at Muhlen. It occurs to me I shall have to give Leonard the word in season if the fair Lanier and madame will grant me time."

Five minutes later Madame Lanier and her daughter were greeting the Englishman with marked cordiality, madame congratulating her, self upon the good luck which brought them to Muhlen before the diligence left.

"Ah!" she said, warmly. "We have missed you and your charming artist friend so much. We have felt quite forlorn, quite *désolé*."

Wycliffe bowed his thanks. If the truth must be confessed he was not a little fascinated by the witchery of the younger Creole's willowy grace of movement and the impressive warmth of her welcome, so different from the languid

insouciance of her usual manner. Nor could a colder-blooded man than he, even without such a welcome, have failed to acknowledge the spell of the dark, winsome, wondrous beauty of Louise Lanier.

CHAPTER II.

A LOVER'S TASK.

Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantage.

HALF an hour later Madame Lanier, her daughter and Wycliffe, were seated at a little table in the dining-room, madame having ordered her meals à la carte and insisted on Wycliffe sitting down with her.

The table d'hôte was still crowded, for other travellers had arrived, and as a steady rain had set in nobody went away. Not only the Frau and her spouse were engaged in waiting, but Else Von Boeck had come to their assistance and was ministering impartially to the wants of all.

Many were the admiring glances which followed her while moving quietly from group to group. Yet there was in her manner a reserve that commanded respect from all, and few would have dared to call on her for service as freely as they called on Frau Schnellwind.

Else did not approach the table where the Laniers sat, for their own servant Jacques was in attendance there. But Wycliffe had several times yielded to the temptation of following her movements. Once too he had suffered a momentary confusion at finding her dark eyes fixed upon him. A half-smile, dimpling the corners of the arched lips, had seemed to say that she had not only heard but understood his disparaging remarks to Westcott.

"Has the Maid of Muhlen bewitched you, monsieur?" said Louise Lanier. "I am quite fascinated with her myself. She seems above the average of sewing girls, doesn't she, mamma?" appealing to madame. "You were wishing a few days since that you might secure a German girl for your tire-woman. This one yonder is neat and comely. Suppose you propose to her to accompany us. Fidèle, you know, is to be married as soon as we return to Paris."

Madame raised her eye-glass and bestowed a comprehensive look on Else Von Boeck.

"The girl seems well enough in appearance," she answered, "but she has too much of the grande air. I fear she would not readily adapt herself to the position."

"She would never adapt herself to a position of servitude, you may rely upon it, madame," interposed Wycliffe, eagerly. "She has breathed only the air of liberty in these mountain fastnesses, she is no common servant girl."

Miss Lanier fluttered her handkerchief impatiently. It was the first sign of petulance he had ever detected in her, for nothing usually disturbed her well-bred and graceful composure.

"There is but the difference in name," she replied. "The girl occupies the position here of a servant. Mamma can at least make the proposition. For my part I think the girl will jump at the chance."

"Don't be hasty, Louise," replied her mother. "I would prefer speaking to the girl before I decide. There is much in the voice and manner of a maid. Fidèle's voice actually soothes those terrible headaches of mine. Her tones are low and musical. This girl probably speaks harshly, like her class, and that would kill me."

"The point is easily determined," said Miss Lanier, coolly. "Mr. Wycliffe, will you ask the girl to bring me a drink of water? Mamma has sent Jacques for those grapes, you know."

Wycliffe half rose, and then, hesitating, said:

"Hadn't you better seek a more private opportunity? The young lady is the Fraulein Von Boeck, not a common servant. She is a niece of the prior in the monastery below here. As you may remember, a party of chamois hunters, including my friend Westcott, came from St. Moritz in this direction, about two weeks ago.

They chanced upon this hotel, and Leonard learned all about her then."

Louise Lanier shrugged her graceful shoulders.

"Monsieur Leonard," she said, "is a regular Bohemian. His tastes are never to be accounted for. But I am convinced that this girl will be gratefully submissive to any destiny which will release her from the horrid monotony of her present life. However," turning to Wycliffe, "you need not assume the responsibility of calling her. I will do it myself."

She tapped on the table with her knife handle as she spoke. Else, but a short distance away, turned quickly. Her colour heightened a little when she saw Miss Lanier beckoning to her. But she did not hesitate a moment to obey the summons. Perhaps she carried her stately figure the least bit stiffly as she came forward, however. Wycliffe felt himself the more embarrassed of the two. He only restrained his inclination to gnaw his moustache viciously by punching holes with the tines of his fork in Frau Schnellwind's damask napkin.

Under no circumstances would Miss Lanier have permitted herself to appear rude.

"Our waiter has gone on an errand," she said, "will you do me the favour to bring me a glass of water?"

She spoke in a musical voice, and in sweet broken German. Else Von Boeck unbent at once. For a moment she was quite deceived. She answered Miss Lanier's bright little smile with one even more sunshiny, but wholly sincere and hearty.

"Certainly," she answered, cordially, in her own tongue, and went to a distant side-board, where the water bottles stood. Every bottle had been emptied. But, rather than keep Miss Lanier waiting, she raised a large pitcher, and started to carry it to her table.

In an instant Wycliffe was at her side.

"Let me," he said. "Such a great pitcher is too heavy for you." He spoke in rapid German.

For the briefest moment she flashed upon him a defiant gaze.

"The heaviness could not hardly be too much for me, Mein Herr," she said. "It is the same wasser pitcher you saw me bring from the fountain less than one hour gone by. I have done it many times, and it is no fatigue to me."

He stood as if petrified. She had spoken the words plainly and distinctly in English, with but a slight foreign accent and quaint way of putting the phrases. Fortunately for him, she had not awaited the result of her home-thrust, but had passed on her way, bearing the pitcher to Miss Lanier. He was determined, however, not to risk another such look from her. He quite turned his back to the table where she now stood quietly hearkening to and now and then answering the questions with which madame and her daughter were plying her.

How marked the contrast between the dark, sparkling, sensuous beauty of the one and the blonde, sunshiny presence of the other. He turned his back, as we have said, on the picture they made and stood at a distant window, staring sullenly down at the torrent which, fed by glacial streams, rushed past in the gorge below, white, foaming and roaring, its narrow channel choked by huge rocks, borne thither by the force of the current in seasons of freshet from time immemorial. He noted its turbulence; but did not see what a mountaineer would have perceived at a glance that the stream was deepening where it was hemmed in by the cliffs.

His thoughts were probably with the trio at the table, for presently he deserted the windows, and satisfying himself by a look that the interview was over, and the Laniers disengaged, he crossed directly to them.

"What success?" he asked, seeing that Else Von Boeck was beyond ear-shot.

Madame Lanier lifted her shoulders and opened the palms of her hands outward, with an expressive gesture. The daughter elevated her arched brows, smiling languidly. Somehow Wycliffe experienced a sensation of relief.

"It cannot be possible," he said, "that the Fraulein rejects the offer of you ladies."

Miss Lanier gave a sarcastic laugh.

"Strange, but true," she said, shrugging her shoulders.

Wycliffe's eyes followed for an instant the stately girl moving amongst the guests.

Madame here spoke.

"Yes. She refuses. She says her father is an officer of the court, and will, this winter, require her attention over his household. But that's all nonsense. The man is probably only a court-baker, barber, or boot-blacker. Surely a dignitary of the court would scarcely permit his daughter to be a servant here. Pshaw!"

"It is difficult to decide, madame," answered Wycliffe. "The Germans are a primitive race, at least in the simplicity of their manners and customs; and the German women are singularly exempt from the restrictions that shackle the sex elsewhere. Leonard tells me this girl has been reared in these mountains, subject only to the training of her uncle, the prior of the monastery below here. He has doubtless allowed her great latitude in her choice of occupations out of study hours."

"The conventionalities of a French education please my taste better," announced madame.

"With the result of such an education and training before me, Madame Lanier cannot wonder that I heartily endorse her sentiment," said Wycliffe, gallantly, looking openly at the daughter and bowing low.

Louise met his admiring look, her dusky eyes lighting up all at once.

"Indeed," he went on, stimulated by that glance, "I have no sort of fancy for a masculine woman. There is always a possibility, in this unconventional country, of a Fraulein Von Boeck, fair as she undoubtedly is now, being developed into a deep-voiced, large-handed, high-stepping Frau Schnellwind."

Louise Lanier's musical laugh rippled out upon the air merrily. She was recovering from her petulant and sarcastic mood.

Hence she was the more ready to adopt Wycliffe's suggestion, made as they arose from the table, that she and her mother should take a look at the torrent.

"The descent is so abrupt that the stream has almost the velocity and beauty of a waterfall," Wycliffe said as they crossed to the window.

Miss Lanier shuddered as they bent from the casement to look down at the gorge, near the verge of which their hotel stood.

"What a terrific force it has," she said, "watching the whirl of the currents as if fascinated. Is it the churning of the waters which gives them that peculiar, creamy whiteness?"

"Partially. But the stream is made up from the draining of the glaciers and snow hills above Muhlen, and such waters are always milky."

"What are those blue and white flowers peeping from the cliffs on the opposite side?"

Wycliffe followed the direction of her finger.

"I am not enough of a botanist to tell you, but they are cheery and bright, are they not, to bloom in a place so inaccessible?"

"Are they inaccessible then? Could one not cross the stream on those boulders?"

"Possibly; but it would require the steadiness of nerve and foot of a chamois hunter."

"I am sorry," she said, heaving a sigh of disappointment. "I am quite grieved to know the flowers cannot be reached; for I am inclined to think that that white blossom is the Alpine rose; and it is so rare that I have not yet secured a single specimen for my herbarium."

"If I had Soliman's carpet, or a flying trunk—" began Wycliffe, playfully.

"Where would be the fame of Leander if he had waited for magic to bear him over the tides of the Hellespont?" said Miss Lanier, flashing on him the bewildering gleam of her eyes.

A sudden determination compressed his lips.

"Leander dared so much for the woman whom he loved, and who loved him," he half whispered, bending towards her. "I did not say it was impossible to reach the cliff over there—but—if I

bring you one of those Alpine roses it must be done with the understanding that I am to have whatever reward I may demand."

Miss Lanier's rich colour deepened.

"I shall promise no reward until I know the extent of the danger incurred," she said, quickly; and, turning round, called to Else Von Boeck, who was passing by.

The girl obeyed the summons.

"Have you ever crossed that torrent?" said Miss Lanier, "to the opposite cliffs on those jutting rocks?"

Else smiled.

"Certainly. Lisabet and I have crossed it before—you understand, during the dry season, when the cattle are in the upper pasture—it is a very easy thing to do to go over when the tide runs low. Now, you see, it is quite more difficult."

"Yet possible to accomplish still?" asked Miss Lanier, not looking at Wycliffe.

"Ach, yes, possible—for Lisabet, I, and Lionel, my dearhound, crossed over this very forenoon. I and my dog returned also; but in the last hour or two a quite heavy rain has fallen above here, and the rocks are almost under water."

"You could not then cross there now?"

"The passage I could make this evening," returned the maid, hesitating. "Yet there would be a risk. Lisabet is not to come back that way to-night."

Miss Lanier turned to Wycliffe.

"You hear what she said," she remarked. "I think you had better not risk the attempt."

"What attempt?" said Else Von Boeck.

Miss Lanier toyed with her travelling gauntletts, but did not condescend to explain. Wycliffe was the one to speak, being possessed by a spirit of bravado.

"I have promised to Miss Lanier one of those Alpine roses," he said, "that spring from the gorge opposite."

The clear eyes, regarding him earnestly, dilated with surprise and fear.

"You would not surely, Mein Herr. It is such a danger to have to meet."

Her voice was raised unconsciously. Madame Lanier, at the next window, heard it, and was now, all at once, aroused to a sudden consciousness of the debate near her.

"What danger are you speaking of?" she asked, joining the group.

Louise told how she had expressed a desire for the flowers, and added that Wycliffe had gallantly engaged to pluck them for her.

"For the reward she offers for them, madame, I would dare everything," said Wycliffe, looking at Louise.

The latter disclaimed nothing.

"But you are not to make the attempt, for any reason," said Madame Lanier, decisively. "Louise can do without the Alpine rose."

"But I do not feel like doing without my reward, madame."

The mother glanced from Wycliffe to her daughter.

"That point I shall leave for you and Louise to settle. Perhaps the Fraulein would kindly direct you to where this kind of rose blooms in some more accessible place."

"Thanks," said Miss Lanier, coolly. "We need not trouble the Fraulein. A rose so easily plucked would be lightly won, as the reward for it being easily won would be as lightly prized."

"Don't be foolish, Louise. You act like a child begging for the moon. Those roses yonder are simply out of reach, and there is no more to be said about it. Besides, it is time for us to be starting. Here is Jacques now to say so."

Piloted by her servant she sailed off, and Louise was preparing to follow when Wycliffe stepped in front of her.

Else Von Boeck, leaning against the casement, and unable to pass them without rudeness, could not fail to catch their brief conversation.

"It is best we should settle this matter without delay," he urged, in a tone almost peremptory.

His companion played quite nervously with the tassels of her gloves a moment, then lifted

her eyes shyly to his face. Instead of reading there the eager pleadings of an impassioned lover, she doubtless saw in it, as Else Von Boeck did, more of a masterful impatience.

"Are you thinking of the fate of the maiden who let fall her glove among the lions that her knight might snatch it from their claws?" she asked, timidly. "Nay, do not disclaim. Our cases shall not be parallel, for, while such a deed of valour and devotion might obtain from me any reward the hero might demand, yet I beg you to hear me command you—command you distinctly," she spoke energetically, "not to venture upon this hazardous attempt."

For one moment his moustache brushed her ungloved hand as he bowed over it.

"I shall remember your wish, and your command. But," and here he rose to his full height, "neither shall I forget the priceless value, in your sight, of an Alpine blossom that has been culled under difficulties."

He followed her from the apartment as he finished, neither of them giving even a backward glance at Else Von Boeck, who was left standing by the window alone.

When they were gone Else looked once through the casement down at the torrent, then up the escarpment of the cliff, where the fatal flowers waved temptingly in the breeze.

"He intends to risk his life for those flowers before he leaves Muhlen," she murmured. "Does the lady realise the danger? Is she wholly heartless? She surely challenged him in a way no lover could resist. But I cannot stand idly by to see the murder done. I must warn him again, though he should deem me bold, and even officious. As a last resort too Lionel and I must be there, to aid him in the emergency which must arise if he persists in the venture."

CHAPTER III.

A DANGEROUS VENTURE.

A friend in need
Is a friend indeed.

MADAME and her daughter had been comfortably settled in the Lanier travelling-coach, which was about to start, when Else Von Boeck stepped into the court-yard and heard Wycliffe's aside.

"To-night, ladies," he said, "when our coach reaches Tiefen Kasten, I hope to greet you with the fairest of Alpine roses. While the diligence is being mended I will essay the task laid on me. But let not Hero forget that the beacon of hope she has lighted is to guide Leander safely to her side, though storm and flood should seek to prevail against him. He would never have braved the Hellespont without the expectation of meeting his lady-love on the other side."

Madame Lanier's face wore an expression of horror, and she lifted her hand protestingly. But Miss Lanier, leaning from the coach, only smiled, and but half deprecatingly. The next instant Ludwig had cracked his whip, the four horses had dashed ahead, and the coach was whirled beyond the archway of the court.

Wycliffe stood watching the departure, while a slight smile curved his lips, until the coach had vanished. Then, turning, he came face to face with Else.

"Mein Herr," she said, in her clear, distinct tones, "pardon me that I have interfered too much with your plans. But I have divine your determination to pluck those flowers. I knew, quite better than you, Mein Herr, the danger to cross over there; and I must urge you every way not to risk your life so needless."

Wycliffe raised his hat courteously, but the half-sarcastic smile which he had sent after Louise Lanier deepened about his bearded mouth.

"At least," he said, "the Fraulein will accept the thanks of a stranger for her charitable interest in his fate. But, surely, a man were a foolproof to consider his life, even if weighed in the balance against the lightest wish of his half-promised bride."

The girl appeared puzzled.

"I haf fear, Mein Herr," she said—"I haf fear my knowledge of your English has led me astray. In Germany we cannot know what you would express by a half-promised bride. If you would say the Meen is your betrothed, surely she would never demand the risk of your life."

Wycliffe laughed.

"Miss Lanier is much sought after by a train of adorers," he said, in a tone more flippant than Else Von Boeck would have cared to hear used by a lover of hers; "and, consequently, she does not lightly value the gift which I would demand in payment for the risk I run. There is no alternative left me, you see. The rose I must have that Miss Lanier may wear it tonight."

"I can show you other bushes full of roses as fair, Mein Herr."

He shook his head.

"You heard what she said: it must be one of the roses from the cliff, or none."

Else Von Boeck drew back.

"I haf understanding," she said, looking straight at him with troubled eyes. "I haf appreciation of an impulse, leading one to sacrifice his or her life for the rescue of another life beloved, but a true affection, it seems to me, would neither demand nor accept a sacrificial offering to be made for a result so—so worthless."

"It is all true as you say," said Wycliffe, now speaking gravely. "You almost tempt me, Fraulein, to give over this foolhardy deed. But I have given my promise."

"Then you will still gif your life for a wild flower of the mountains?"

"I must have the flower, Fraulein. Yet I thank you all the same. One favour I make bold to ask. Do not mention this foolish undertaking to anyone unless it should be to my friend Westcott, who will miss me, if he returns from climbing that peak before I get back. And really you can spare yourself any anxiety. I have been trained to all sorts of athletic feats, and it is a mere nothing to step from stone to stone over that torrent."

She shook her head.

"I know the place, Mein Herr, and I know the rain haf swollen the stream in the past hour and the water is rising steadily. By-and-bye those boulders will be quite under water—perhaps before you haf had time to cross over and return."

"So much the more need then that I should make the effort without delay."

He lifted his hat and had gone several steps when a sudden determination seized him, and he returned.

"There is one aid you can render me."

"What can I do?" eagerly. "I feel, Mein Herr, I haf no power any more to avert the calamity I haf fear of for you."

"You can do much to steady my nerves, Fraulein, if you will forgive the impertinence with which I spoke of you awhile ago. It was thoughtlessly said—I did not mean it, pray forgive me."

"Ah, it was that I was plebeian enough," with a merry smile, "to have a pitcher poised on my head. Was that the mortal offence, Mein Herr?"

"The customs of my country are so different, Fraulein," he stammered. "It was that which misled me."

"I will forgive you seventy times seven," she answered, eagerly, "if you will but relinquish your hazardous attempt."

"Do you know you are tempting me," he said, "to disloyalty to Miss Lanier? If I relinquish those flowers I relinquish her likewise—"

She drew herself up proudly.

"I thank you," she said, "that you haf shown my interference to me in its true light. I cannot haf on me the responsibility to bias your fealty to Mees Lanier. If she must haf the flowers I suppose you will dare eberything forto pluck them."

"If then I bring one of the blossoms to lay at your feet will you not grant me absolution for my unfortunate speech to Westcott?"

"Mees Lanier," she answered, more haughtily still, "would haf no enjoyment of a gift so

priceless, did she hear it was shared with another. You haf my forgiveness freely, Mein Herr, for ebery small pang my wounded self-love may haf felt, as you pronounced judgment against me to your friend. But for a gift purchased at such a price as your offering to Mees Lanier must be I haf not any use."

She bowed to him gravely as she spoke and passed into the hotel.

Wycliffe left the court-yard himself without further delay, turning his steps toward the path that led down to the torrent.

Else Von Boeck's haughty air, however, deserted her as soon as she was out of his sight. Calling to her dog to follow she sped swiftly up the narrow staircase to an upper room, where she knew she could overlook from the balcony window, herself unseen, every proceeding of Wycliffe. She soon beheld him descending the cliff, and soon he was standing within its escarpment, exactly opposite the spot where the Alpine blossoms grew.

"The torrent is fearfully swollen, and does rise more rapidly than usual," she murmured, anxiously. "If he is sure-footed, he may reach that ledge where the flowers do grow. But it is doubtful if the tops of the stepping-stones will be above water when he is ready to return; and if that is the case the ledge itself will be submerged, so that he will nowhere have standing room. I did hope in spite of all that he would not risk the passage."

As she looked Wycliffe had begun his perilous journey. She held her breath and watched anxiously, nervously clasping her hands together. But his agility was so perfect, he sprang from stone to stone so lightly, that she soon began to smile at her fears.

"He is as skilful as a chamois hunter," she thought, drawing a long breath of relief as she saw him land safely at the foot of the opposite precipice. "Ah! he looks for a foothold, that he may climb to where the rose-bush grows. Heaven give him success!"

Wycliffe hesitated for some time. There was evidently no crevice for hand or foot to avail itself of above the ledge where he stood. Neither goat nor chamois could have found a stepping place there. The flowers, meantime, waved securely in their elevated niche above, as if mocking him.

"What will he do?" she wondered.

Wycliffe still hesitated, as if completely baffled. Then, all at once, he thought of his knife. Leaning with one hand against the face of the cliff, he drew with the other his large travelling knife from his pocket. Then he thrust the broad blade open between the strata of the rock where it was possible to find deposits of earth and gravel; and so made slight foot-holds. In this way, by slow degrees, he lifted himself nearer and nearer to the flowers.

"Nature guards them," he said, "as jealously as the golden apples of Hesperides were guarded by the dragon."

As he spoke he glanced over his shoulder downwards at the whirl of the waters, dashing along the base of the cliff against which he hung half-way up. Suddenly he thought that he heard a voice sounding above the roar of the torrent. The sound reached him again, and despite the shrillness of the Alpine cry, he identified it at once as the voice of Else. He could not turn his head; to have done that would have been fatal; but he answered the call as best he could. But he felt sure that his reply was lost in the roaring of the waters that now raged wilder than ever between them.

After a pause to recover strength and breath he essayed once more to advance. With infinite difficulty he cut new resting-places for his feet until at last he found he was almost within reach of the bush. Another moment and his success was complete.

Uttering an exclamation of triumph he grasped the bush, and, bending down the branches, hastily plucked blossom after blossom; then added quickly to the roses a few of the blue and red Alpine blossoms that grew near. After this cautiously he began the descent.

A single misstep he knew would plunge him headlong into the abyss beneath. Glancing

downward he shuddered to see the jutting rocks, sharp, cruel, relentless as Scylla, past which the torrent roared and chafed and boiled, insatiate as Charybdis. Carefully feeling with his toes for the orifices he had cut in the rock, for he could not see them, he succeeded at last in reaching the solid shelf of rocks below; and stood once more for a moment erect on his feet, and for the instant safe.

His first glance was cast upward to the cliff from which he had descended. As he looked his flesh began to creep. Never until now had he realised his peril. A single false step, a failure to even find one of the crevices that he had cut, and he would have been at once precipitated into the boiling vortex below, where he would have been torn into pieces as in some horrible mill by the grinding, whirling, insatiable waters.

Thinking of this he looked below. What a whirlpool the torrent had become! The boulders by which he had crossed the stream, and by which he had hoped to return, were now almost entirely under water. In fact, the very ledge on which he stood was covered, even as he paused, with the rising tide. In another moment the advancing surges had risen to his ankles; a moment more they were half way to his knee.

"Must I die here like a rat in a trap?" he cried. "What, is there no hope? Better to perish in attempting to cross than to be washed ignominiously off this rock."

He advanced to the edge of the shelf and was about to make the almost hopeless effort when suddenly he heard, above the roar of the wind and waters, a note of warning. It was at first a faint, far-off appeal, but it rose stronger and nearer; and looking across the gorge he saw, like an angel from heaven, the form of Else Von Boeck.

She stood there, outlined against the greyish azure of the sky, erect upon the summit of the crag, her blue robe fluttering in the wind, her arms reached out to him in utter gesticulation. At her side was Lionet, her dog, his head turned towards her as if he was watching her movements understandingly. Wycliffe could see that she was calling to him in words, but their import was lost to him in the terrific roaring of the whirlpool below.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

DR. TANNER OUTDONE.—In 1539 there lived in Scotland one John Scot, no way commended for his learning, for he had none, nor for his good qualities, which were few. Being overthrown in a suit of law, he took sanctuary at Holyrood; where, out of discontent, he fasted for thirty or forty days together. Fame having spread this abroad, the king would have it tested, and shut him up in the Castle of Edinburgh in a private room. At the end of thirty-two days he was released; shortly after he went to Rome, where he gave a like proof of his fasting to Pope Clement the Seventh; similarly at Venice; afterwards, returning to England, opposed bitterly King Henry's divorce, and was thrust into prison, where he is supposed to have died.

DEATH BY THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.—The first voyage of the *Livadia*, says the "Builder," has been marked by one of those incidents which show how new inventions often develop new dangers. One of the great points urged in favour of the electric light has been its safety. But one element of danger was overlooked. On the 16th of October a stoker on board the *Livadia*, who was helping to swing an electric lamp in the stoke-hole, while holding the apparatus in one hand, unawares completed the electric circuit with the other. He was instantly struck dead by the force of the electric current, and as occurs in cases of men struck by light-

ning decomposition of all within the skin almost immediately became evident. The ornate ritual of the Eastern Church marked the committal to the deep of the remains of the first victim of marine lighting electricity.

LORD MAYOR'S DAY.—The earliest printed description (according to Fairholt's History of the Pageants) of the shows on Lord Mayor's Day, is that by George Peele, in 1585, when Sir Wolstan Dixie was installed. The pageants were occupied by children dressed to personate London, the Thames, Loyalty, etc., etc. Some idea of the annual pageants may be gathered from that designed for the mayoralty of Sir John Seman, of the Fishmongers' Company, in 1616. The first pageant was a fishing boat, with fishermen at work, drawing up their nets laden with living fish, which they distributed among the people. These pageants were placed on stays with wheels, the latter being concealed. This ship was followed by a crowned dolphin in allusion to the arms of the mayor of the company, and the dolphin had the musician Arion on his back. Then the King of the Moors and his followers on horseback. Then a punning reference to the mayor, a lemon tree nobly laden. Then a bower adorned with the names of those of the Fishmongers' Company who had served as Lord Mayor, with celebrations of Sir William Walworth and Wat Tyler. Lastly came the grand pageant drawn by mermen and mermaids commemorating the slaying of Tyler; on the top sat a victorious angel, and beneath was represented King Richard, surrounded by kingly virtues. . . . In 1853 Mr. Fenton, the science artist of Sadler's Wells Theatre, and Mr. Cooke, of Astley's, reproduced the old allegorical cars with modern improvements. But it was felt to ill accord with our very matter-of-fact times. Soon afterwards the city barges were sold and the water pageant abolished. The Guildhall banquet, attended by the ministers, is now the great feature. The cost of this feast is estimated at £2,500. Half of this sum is paid by the mayor, the other half is divided between the two sheriffs.

A YORKSHIRE ODDITY.—When aged five-and-twenty, he (Jemmy Hirst) took a fancy to a fine bull-calf belonging to his father, which he called Jupiter, and he began to train it to perform various tricks and to break it to bear the saddle. Jupiter bore the bridle patiently enough, but plunged and tossed his horns when the saddle was placed on his back. Jemmy next ventured to mount his back. The young bull stood for a minute or two, as his father said, "right down stagnated," and then began to plunge and kick. Jemmy held fast, and Jupiter, finding he could not thus dislodge his rider, set off, tearing across the paddock towards a thick, quickset hedge at the bottom. But instead of leaping it, as Jemmy expected, the bull ran against the fence and precipitated his rider over the hedge into the ditch on the further side. Jemmy was unhurt except for a few scratches and some rents in his garments and patches of mud, and, picking himself up, raced after Jupiter, nothing daunted, caught him, and remounting him, mastered the beast. After this he rode Jupiter daily, to the great amusement of people generally, especially when he trotted into Snaith on market days. . . . He rode out with Lord Beaumont's fox-hounds, always on Jupiter, who was trained to jump as well as to run. His dress was as extraordinary as his mount, for he wore a broad-brimmed hat of lambskin, fully nine feet in circumference, his waistcoat was like Joseph's coat of many colours, made of patchwork; his breeches were of listings of various colours, plaited together by his housekeeper, and he wore yellow boots. Though Jupiter could keep up with the fox-hunters for a few miles, his powers of endurance were not so great as those of a horse, and he began to lag. Lord Beaumont would pass Jemmy and say, "Come, Mr. Hirst, you will not be in at the death." "No, but I shall at the dinner," was Jemmy's dry reply. Lord Beaumont always took the hint and invited him to Carlton House to the hunting dinner. His lordship had a nephew visiting him on one occasion who thought he could amuse himself at Jemmy's expense. The young dandy, bowing to him on

his saddle, said, "I wish you a good morning, Joseph." "My name isn't Joseph," answered Jemmy. "Oh, I beg pardon. I mistook you by your coat and waistcoat for that patriarch." "Young man," said Jemmy, with perfect composure, "twin't do to judge by appearances. As I wor a-coming up, says I to myself, 'You're a gentleman.' When I got a bit closer, says I, 'Nay, he's a dandy.' And now that I heard thee voice" (thy voice) "I knows thou'r nowt but a jackass!"

JEMMY HIRST AND GEORGE THE THIRD.—George the Third had expressed a wish to see Jemmy. A messenger came to announce that His Majesty wished to see Lord Beaumont and Mr. Hirst; so Jemmy was ushered into the royal presence. But instead of kneeling and kissing the hand that was extended to him in silence, he caught it and gave it a hearty shake, saying, "Eh! I'm glad to see thee such a plain owd chap. If thou ever comes to Rawcliffe step in and give me a visit. I can give thee some rare good wine, or a sup of brandy and water at any time." The count was convulsed with laughter, and King George the Third could hardly contain himself. However, he did not laugh out openly, but with courtesy maintained his gravity, and asked Jemmy how he liked London. To Lord Beaumont's letter, informing him of the king's desire to see him, Jemmy had sent this characteristic reply:—"My Lord,—I have received thy letter stating his Majesty's wish to see me. What does his Majesty wish to see me for? I'm nothing related to him, and I owe him nothing that I know of, so I can't conceive what he wants with me. I suspect thou hast been telling him what queer clothes I wear, and such like. Well, thou may tell his Majesty that I am very busy just now training an otter to fish; but I'll contrive to come in the course of a month or so, as I should like to see London." Jemmy died on October 29th, 1829, at the age of ninety-one. We are indebted to Mr. Gouid's most interesting volume for the foregoing account of this remarkable man.

TYBURN.—This place of execution is said to have been first established in the time of Henry IV., previous to which malefactors met their doom at a place called The Elms, in Smithfield. Oxford Street was once called Tyburn Road, and the fashionable locality of Park Lane was called Tyburn Lane. Tyburn turnpike gate stood on the site of Hyde Park railings, opposite the Edgeware Road. The gallows at Tyburn was of triangular form, resting on three supports. Near it were wooden galleries for the accommodation of spectators. It was situated at the east end of the present Connaught Place, nearly opposite the entrance to Upper Seymour Street. Among remarkable persons who suffered death at Tyburn were the Holy Maid of Kent; Mrs. Turner, the poisoner and inventor of yellow starch; Felton, the assassin of Buckingham; Jack Sheppard and Jonathan Wild; Mrs. Brownrigg, notorious for her cruelty to her apprentices; Dr. Dodd; and the last malefactor executed there was John Austin, on 7th November, 1783, for robbery with violence. In this year the place of execution was transferred from Tyburn to Newgate. A court in High Street, St. Giles's, is said to get its name of "Bowl Yard" from the circumstance of criminals on their way to execution being there presented with a bowl of liquor as their last refreshment.

KING OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE.—In the year 1800 it was settled by the Privy Council that in consequence of the Irish Union, the royal style and title should be changed on the 1st of January following—viz., from "George III. by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, to George III. by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith." And thus the title of King of France, which had been borne by the English monarchs for 432 years (since Edward the Third) was ultimately abandoned. The abandonment of the title in question led to our foreign official correspondence being carried on in the English language, instead of in the French as previously.

ZILLAH THE GIPSY;

OR,

LOVE'S CAPTIVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COMING STORM.

And I felt my cold cheek burning,
And my dead heart beating fast.

"I AM Zillah," repeated the girl, as Lady Alesia started back at the name, "and you are my Aunt Alesia."

For a second the calculating woman of the world was thoroughly bewildered, non-plussed, and overcome.

This was Zillah, the wandering waif, who had strayed from home and kith and kin in childhood, lured through her simple innocence and mistaken ideals.

She never thought to meet her thus, but, on the other hand, she was too wise and cautious to pretend not to recognise her or to deny her identity. So she feigned a pleasant sort of surprised pleasure and held out her hand.

"We thought you were dead, Zillah. We advertised for you, we did all that was possible to find you, but in vain."

Zillah followed Lady Alesia into the morning-room of the villa, and the latter very carefully shut the door.

"You put Madeline in my place, you have wickedly plotted to gain possession of all," said Zillah, standing before Lady Alesia and looking steadily into her eyes, "and I am about to unmask her, to reveal you both to the duke and the world in your true colours."

"You are mistaken, Zillah; the prince merely looked upon her as his adopted daughter, nothing more, and this the duke knows."

"And am I to have no claim?" cried the girl, staggered by her aunt's coolness. "Madeline has no right to appropriate all, to rob me of—"

She paused, instinctively conscious that her aunt was holding something back which strengthened Madeline's position, and that she was again playing with Zillah as a cat plays with a mouse ere devouring it.

The absent are in truth "always wrong." Madeline had stolen life and love from Zillah.

"Listen, Zillah," Lady Alesia went on, waving her to a seat, "and learn the truth. You ran away in early childhood because you were not happy with us; the fact is you were too wild to be civilised or to bear the yoke of custom. I did my best with you, Heaven knows, but it was all to no avail."

Lady Alesia turned her eyes to the ceiling with a sort of reverent entreaty, and at her voice and gestures the present faded from Zillah's mind and she fancied herself again a child, roaming barefooted about the gardens of Rosendale, in turn petted and coaxed by Thyra and the victim of her aunt's and cousin's cruelty always.

"I know how you treated me," said Zillah, with an indignant flush; "far worse than your dogs, but I have not come to recall the past or to speak about that, I have come for justice."

Lady Alesia laughed a little under her breath.

"Always melo-dramatic, my poor Zillah," she said, gently, "it's a pity you didn't go on the stage."

"Perhaps it is."

"On the stage your powers would be better appreciated."

"Perhaps they are."

Lady Alesia started and then looked grave. "Oh, you go in for that sort of thing, do you? It's just what might be expected from one of your birth. Arabians are all nomads, defying rules and prejudices. When you sought the gypsies, my dear girl, you only rejoined your ancestors."

"I am Corelli," said Zillah, with a deep flush and superb gesture. "You may have heard of her—in fact I think she had the honour of singing before the Duke and Duchess of Clydale last evening in 'Don Giovanni.' It will be a pity to strip that painted daw, Madeline, of her borrowed plumes, will it not? Not a pleasant exposé either for your daughter or you."

Lady Alesia changed her tactics with miraculous presence of mind. She removed her fine eyes from the ceiling, sighed, looked pensive, and lifted her glass.

"So you are Corelli," she said, in a steady voice. "Really, my dear Zillah, you might have done worse."

"I might, for instance, be an impostor," she answered, with deadly effect. "As it is I prefer to be what I am."

"What you are?" echoed her ladyship. "Just so!—magnificent artiste. I remember, as a child, how loudly you sang in church. I think I reproved you for that want of good breeding."

"Before seeking the aid of the law or taking the matter into court I came to you, Lady Alesia, to demand an explanation of Madeline's conduct. By what right have you put her in my place, given her my name, and palmed her off to the world as your niece?" They will say, 'Point to me the grave where Madeline, your daughter, is buried.'

"I told you she was accepted as the prince's adopted child, but that is not entirely the question. Suppose you are his illegitimate daughter, as I know and can prove you are, what then?"

These were Michael's exact words and assertion, and for that matter how could Zillah prove the contrary? The prince was a villain. He had led a libertine's life. He might have duped his supposed Arabian wife. If so, Zillah was legally disinherited.

However indignantly she might deny it, the fact would remain.

"I can demand the closest investigation," said Zillah, rising to depart. "You are not fighting a penniless girl, remember, and I have friends who will aid me besides; for my dead mother's sake, the shadow flung on her name and fame must be removed."

"The law does not, I believe, deal with romance," Lady Alesia muttered, snakily. "It might suit my brother to wed the gipsy Thyra—most probably it did. Men of his nature often prefer a rough drinking-trough to one of gold or crystal. No doubt in your profession you will have found that the coarser the clay the more the lover prizes it. The 'coeur vulgaire' wins the race—it triumphs over man and fate. Strange, is it not? But human nature is so brutal and barbarous."

Was she speaking the truth, or was it a lie all the time, or might she, knowing it was false, cling to the falsehood as it suited her purpose?

"No wonder my mother died," said Zillah, bitterly, "if the prince were as cruel as his sister."

"I do not think you can injure Madeline under the circumstances," went on her ladyship. "The heir Michael is satisfied."

"You are a participant with him in a crime," said Zillah, in her fine, unfaltering tones, "and I will demand justice in a court of law. Let us sift the whole truth to the foundation, and the judgment of the clever and the wise be given."

"Suppose we discuss the matter another time?" suggested her ladyship, as if wearied of the subject. "You have your remedy. Seek satisfaction in the law courts, and we shall be prepared to refute any accusation you may think fit to bring."

Zillah recoiled before the callous contempt of Lady Alesia's words and manner. Nothing seemed to affect her in the slightest degree. But inwardly she trembled. Her restless eyes wandered from Zillah to the various objects of the room with nervous anxiety, and it was with considerable relief she saw her niece rise to take her departure.

"No doubt I shall see you on your stage some

night," Lady Alesia said, with a parting smile, but she could have sprung at Zillah and strangled her as she stood before her famous, courted, and successful—the public's idol, and Madeline's rival.

When Zillah had left the villa a mile behind the tangled skein of her thoughts grew still more twisted and confused. She felt suddenly exhausted. Was it true? That was the question. Had she no claim? Everything rested on the proofs and evidence relating to Thyra's marriage with the prince. Even if all were restored to her, could the pain at her heart ever cease? Was not the duke faithless and frivolous—a false god—a cruel enchanter? What could give her back the old faith and the old love—love which he had vowed was indestructible at the very moment he contemplated breaking his vows?

Zillah looked ill and shaken as she entered the train to return to London; she half wished she had never undertaken the journey. Michael's threats haunted her; they had been vague, but clearly understood by Zillah, and perhaps there is nothing so painful to endure as an intangible danger half woven into words, with the form and substance of what it really means hidden.

She was thankful she had not to sing to-night. She felt wholly unequal to any effort. On arriving at the terminus she sprang into a cab and was quickly driven to her hotel.

As she was ascending the stairs to her apartments she came suddenly face to face with the Duke of Clydale.

Zillah's heart beat to suffocation, but her face was white to the lips, and she felt all strength leave her limbs, but she passed on in silence—that at least she could do—he should see she was proud and strong, that she despised him. At last she reached the top stair, and was preparing to enter her drawing-room, when she heard a step behind her, and partly turning saw him by her side.

"Mademoiselle Corelli?" he said, lifting his hat. Had he really recognised her as the Zillah of his past, or was he seeking her now merely moved by admiration of her singing? Unknown admirers were constantly sending her presents—all sorts of notes were concealed with diamonds in the bouquets thrown at her feet, but these admirers were invariably disappointed with the young prima donna's coldness.

"I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance," she said, haughtily, turning aside, and then lifted her veil.

"Zillah," he cried, with a touch of the old fervour, "will you not speak to me?"

"I should prefer not," she said, very quietly, but whiter than before, and then a shade came over her dark face as she said, with a forced laugh:

"What words should pass between us now?" He followed her into the room, the weakness of his suffering and self-pity mastering him.

"Zillah, Zillah," he murmured, "have some pity on man whose anguish is greater than he can bear."

The burning eyes were seeking her face now and she was once more under their spell; they seemed to turn her dizzy and faint, and madden her brain.

"You forsook me," she said, driven to speak in order not to sob, "you abandoned me in the basest manner possible. What shall I say to a traitor? Nothing but that I despise him."

The outburst gave her strength, and at the last she spoke steadily, but nevertheless she felt helpless under the maddening tide of emotion that swelled through her veins.

"I thought you were worthless," he answered, still standing before her in a frenzy of bitter revolt against his fate and everyone who had separated them. "I came to seek you and you had fled. You had returned to the gypsies. I sent you a note by one of them begging you to come to me, and he afterwards brought me what I considered fatal proofs of your dishonour. And then I was ruined. Others begged me to save them by a wealthy marriage. What was left to me in the world? I had lost you."

Zillah sprang to her feet with a trembling cry. She saw it all. It was the work of Thyra and

Michael, who had planned this revenge and vowed to separate her from the duke at all hazards.

"I was their victim," she faltered, after more explanations had taken place, "they lured me to the tents; they threatened to murder me; they dragged me with them from place to place; every cruel complication was used to part us. And we are parted. Nothing can reunite us, nothing, nothing."

She was sobbing hysterically, her suffering could no longer be silently borne, and after all he was ignorant of who she really was. The remembrance of the double injury visited on her by her Aunt Alesia and Madeline goaded her beyond herself. Another minute and the whole story of her birth, her antecedents, and her desertion of her home and kith and kin in childhood would have fallen from her lips with all the thrilling fervour of truth when the door was softly opened and Mathias entered.

Zillah sobbed on, the duke kneeling at her feet and pressing her hand to his lips; he had forgotten all, he thought and cared for nothing in all the world but her.

"My dear duke," hurriedly whispered the old musician, "I heard you were here and hastily followed. There is a lady in a carriage at the door of the hotel asking for you."

"My wife, I suppose," he said, with a shrug—the wife who represented respectability, comfort, ease, and all the good, solid things of this life; but here was his one and only love, whom absence had made ten times dearer, whom to lose seemed more bitter than death.

Zillah was half insensible, and rested in his arms like some pale image and not a living woman.

"I love her," muttered the duke, pressing his lips on hers for one second of dangerous rapture, "but I know we are parted; my love shall bring her no shade of dishonour. This is like the farewell on a death-bed. I shall seek her no more," then, bending over her with agonised intensity, he whispered, "Good bye, my darling, good bye for ever."

He laid her down unresisting in the couch, and without a word hurried from the room. It was a heaven-born love, although it might be now a sin to recall it. The burden must be borne; others had been instrumental in parting them, but their hearts were again clear to each other. In Zillah's would be no bitterness, no contempt, and in his no crushing disbelief in her purity; their souls were invisibly united, again fused in one, because each seemed perfect to the other.

When the duke regained the street he saw his wife lean forward in the carriage, evidently watching for his re-appearance. Her lips shook as he sprang into the carriage and her brow was dark and clouded. It seemed offering her a dreadful affront, seeking this young prima donna openly, and Madeline's temper was to-day not quite under perfect control.

"I suppose I have shortened the enjoyment of your visit," she said, glancing up at the hotel windows and speaking with that delicate shade of mockery in her tones so irritating to a man.

"I have forgotten the meaning of the word."

"Perhaps you regret having married me;

perhaps, you wish yourself back in Italy,

and—"

"Very often," he said, coolly, "but, my dear Ida, for goodness' sake don't work yourself up into such a white-heat passion; plenty of people call on the Corelli, why not I?"

"Why not?" hissed Madeline, "because it is an insult to me. I read your looks last night at the opera house too well. She was the girl you loved in Italy, and might have married had you not been beggared."

"Take care," he said, with a dark look, his handsome eyes fiery with pain and passion, "that I don't prefer beggary still; to win Zillah's love might be worth the sacrifice of an empire."

"Zillah?" echoed Madeline, drawing in her breath, and scarcely believing the evidence of her senses. She seemed as if turned to stone. The terrible truth was dawning on her at last. Her cousin was her rival, that injured, absent Zillah had had power to charm and fascinate

him in spite of all; at this very moment she had triumphed.

Zillah and the Corelli were one person.

Occupied with his own reflections the duke had not perceived that sudden catching of the breath and ominous silence.

Madeline was too terrified for speech, she lay back with closed eyes against the carriage lining.

Zillah disrowned had conquered; in resigning all she had gained the duke's love, and Madeline, who appropriated Zillah's name and fortune, was no nearer his heart than ever.

Bitterly she now regretted her recent foolish jealous outburst; it would only make him dislike her still more, perhaps drive him utterly away; whereas had she been calm and patient his own sense of honour and duty would have bound him to her side.

Like all weak natures Madeline was cunning and relied upon small artifices to ensure success. How could she get him away from London without seeking Zillah again? She wove a hundred projects for seeking safety in flight as they drove back to their mansion in Eaton Square. Zillah by a few simple words could ruin her and expose her false position. When would those few words be spoken?

As she alighted from the carriage he saw her eyes were full of tears and that her whole appearance bore evidence of acute mental suffering.

"I want you to forgive me, Bertram," she said, resting her head on his breast as they entered the library together. "I had no right to speak as I did; forgive me, dear, it was a woman's jealous dread."

He was instantly softened by her repentant air.

He knew that he and Zillah must never if possible meet again, and as Madeline let her pretty eyes drop he drew her kindly to him.

It was natural she should be jealous if she suspected the truth, and the best thing for them both would be to leave England.

"At least I can avoid meeting her," he muttered, realising the full force of his danger, "this, at all events, is left me."

And yet he could now recall her image more clearly through the tender haze of yearning and despair, she was endeared to him by so many memories.

His vivid, ardent fancy increased his restlessness.

He pictured himself and Zillah, alone with their perfect love, gliding over the soft and shining waters of the Grand Canal in some Venetian gondola, with the balmy sweetness of the southern air about them, and all the dreamy charm of Venice to add to their delight in each other's presence.

He felt maddened and desolate, an awful loneliness of desolation.

Exquisite happiness had been missed, for there can be no return of youth's golden hours which once chimed have for ever vanished.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE BLOW IS STRUCK.

The bitter thoughts of all my fate must miss
Hung dark and like a pall across the years.

"My dear child, if you give way like this you will be too ill to sing any more this season," Mathias is saying, a few days after the duke's meeting with Zillah at the hotel. "And what good does it do? It will ruin your complexion and your health, and with your health your voice. Can you calm yourself sufficiently to listen to what I have to say?"

Zillah lifted her heavy eyes, and turned to him with the pretty mutinous gesture of some wayward, suffering child.

"I am weary of life, I wish to die," she answered, "leave me in peace."

"That is just precisely what I will not do, carina. There is too much for you to do to think of dying for half a century to come. Besides, this to be the reward of all my trouble and care to find

you fretting yourself into your grave at the very moment when you have all to gain?"

"There is nothing to gain. I have seen Lady Alesia and she declares that she can prove that I am Prince Anatole's illegitimate daughter."

"You have seen your aunt, Lady Alesia? My dear Zillah, I begged you to leave me alone in this affair and I would checkmate them. There is nothing I enjoy more than a game of this sort, but your going may ruin matters."

"I really don't care what they say," she answered, languidly, "evil is always strong, and injustice reigns everywhere on this earth."

Mathias opened a drawer and took out a pile of letters, some of which he glanced through.

"Here are some of my agent's communications," he said, smiling, "she has worked hard in your service. She has got a deck of yours from Adrienne Desvignes, Lady Alesia's lady's-maid—Adrienne, to do her justice, has exerted herself to the utmost to fathom the family mystery—the desk and its contents are now in the hands of our lawyers, who are going to work very rapidly. My dear Zillah, for Heaven's sake rally your spirits and try and tell me clearly all that your aunt said."

"She spoke of a marriage with Prince Anatole and a gipsy called Thyra, who lured me from my home and never would tell me who were my parents. She declares that the son Michael is sole heir to everything, that he is an eccentric man who prefers a wandering life to taking up his title and name, and had divided the property with the Duchess of Clydale, the next inheritor."

"This man is an imposter and must be unmasked, he has the pleasure of looking forward to several years' penal servitude," said Mathias "unless he makes a full confession of his guilt prior to the trial."

"Then you don't believe there ever was a marriage between Thyra and the prince?"

"Most certainly not. She is in league with the gypsies for the purpose of deluding you and retaining the estates. We shall see how this story reads by the light of legal examinations and acumen. My opinion is they'll be so terrified when we strike our first blow they will make a ready confession, and you will be acknowledged sole heiress."

Zillah shook her head, she knew what dangerous and remorseless people she had to deal with.

"They would not stick at murder to carry out their plans—my life will be no longer safe."

"My dear child, you are nervous and weak, and therefore in no fit state to judge of anything. I've had my private detective—Jane Harding, a quiet woman in black—sole attendant all along on the duchess; she has valuable evidence. Adrienne Desvignes can also testify to Lady Alesia's interviews with the gypsies, that sum of money have been given to them, and that this claimant Michael is a drunken, worthless character, who lets more out in his drunken fits than is prudent for their interests. Oh! we've got them tight enough. Look at this."

He tossed the copy of a lawyer's letter to Zillah, who proceeded to read it attentively over.

"I fancy that will somewhat startle the duke's legal advisers, Messrs. Clarke and Howlett. What is your opinion?"

"If it should harm him," said Zillah, lifting her hand to her brow, "I would rather withdraw all claim."

"That is just a woman's insanity—impulse and feeling ruin them all. He has not used you well, Zillah."

"He was deceived—he always loved me."

How sweet it was to hear his name!

"Only talk of my beloved," runs the saying, "speak ill of him if you must, but talk of him always."

Mathias shrugged his shoulders.

"Will you hear reason? Your voice may fail you, and you will most certainly grow older, and you may be poor; age and poverty, ugliness and poverty—sapisti! there is nothing so bitter in all the world."

"Tell me what I shall do," she said, more gently.

"Assert your position. You are a prince's yes, yes, I know you do—we can never hide love and a cough—he will be your captive for ever, even now he adores you because he knows you are courted, famous, and admired. What did I tell you, Zillah? I'm an old man of the world, and no saint for that matter; men never prize the woodland flower that blooms unseen. And now he hears that the Count this and that and the Marquis Marinelli and the Duke Alberto are in love with you, that you have but to choose—choose, mind you, what he forsakes—that's bitter for such a man; it is your revenge, and it cuts to the heart."

Zillah was silent, reading over that copy of her lawyer's letter to the duke's legal advisers, Messrs. Clarke and Howlett. It was indeed true, the blow had been struck and they must now wait the issue of events.

Meanwhile invitations to some of the most fashionable parties of the season pour in on the Duchess of Clydale. She has scarcely an hour disengaged. Her five o'clock teas are considered charming. Like the rest of her aristocratic acquaintances she invites dramatic celebrities on occasions to her receptions, and people are surprised never to meet either of the two famous rivals and singers, Zaire Desvilles or Corelli, at her mansion.

The morning after Zillah's visit to Lady Alesia Madeline receives a long letter from her mother warning her of this new danger which has cropped up and which Madeline knows but too well. The name of "Zillah" uttered by the duke during that homeward drive was sufficient revelation. Still, from the tone of Lady Alesia's letter, Madeline fancied her cousin would be averse to carrying matters into court, and with the strong case still left them to play, viz., that of Michael's claim, she thought it probable that the most resentful resistance might be overcome.

The duke had agreed to leave London at the end of the week. He had gone north for a few days, and at the present moment Madeline was expecting his return.

She was surrounded with groups of friends, some discussing the splendid toilettes at a grand ball at Doncaster House, when she saw one of the Ladies Delamere, who was constantly with her, point with an amused smile to an extract in one of the papers lying on the table.

"What is it that interests you, Rose?" she asked, leaning forward and touching her shoulder. "Any account of the yachting at Cowes?"

Lady Rose handed the duchess the paper without replying.

"Of course it's some absurd mistake," she said, lightly, but she was surprised at the eagerness with which the duchess read the news.

From the "Thermometer," June 4th.—"It is reported that a new claimant has arisen for the Anatole estates. A daughter of the notorious Prince Anatole, of European celebrity, is about to dispute the succession, a girl who mysteriously disappeared about twelve years ago and who is no other than one of the most celebrated singers of the day. The case is to be conducted by a West End firm of undoubted respectability and we are likely to have a very graphic résumé of the young artiste's career. Nothing in the annals of romance could perhaps be more interesting than the present situation of affairs."

"What does it mean, dear, I wonder?" asked Lady Rose, glancing over Madeline's shoulder.

What did it NOT mean? Madeline threw down the paper with petulant contempt.

"Everyone knows what sort of a paper the 'Thermometer' is. I wonder how it ever got here. Someone must have called and accidentally left it; they make up all sorts of absurd stories, you know, chiefly affecting the aristocracy, in order to sell their paper."

"Still it must be very unpleasant; no doubt the duke will take steps to prevent the circulation of such detestable scandals."

Lady Rose fancied the duchess was a shade paler and that her hands slightly trembled, but



[LOVE'S DESPAIR.]

no more was said, as the entrance of fresh visitors occupied Madeline's attention.

"A cloud no bigger than a man's hand" was arising and threatening the pleasant smoothness of her existence. She began to be nervously anxious regarding the duke's return; he was late, had anything detained him?

Would that they were miles from England, away from all chance of meeting Zillah. Madeline had always a lurking terror that he might seek her and hear all from her lips. She was not sorry when her guests departed and she found herself alone—alone save for the company of her maid—the quiet woman in black—who brought her mistress in some letters on a silver tray.

She saw Madeline frowning at that fallen paper, her cheek resting on her hand, apparently buried in deep thought.

The letters were mostly for the duke. She put them aside in a bureau against his return and then she picked up the paper and read the paragraph again carefully through—her maid watching her from a distant corner.

"How did this paper get here, Harding?" she asked, staring into vacancy.

"I believe it came by post this morning. I saw your grace open it with others."

A step on the stairs—a hurried approach, and the duke appeared. Madeline rose to greet him.

"I am so glad you have come, Bertram," she said, with an effort of self-restraint. "I was afraid something might have happened to prevent your arriving to-night."

"What did you expect might happen?"

He spoke more sternly than was his wont. She felt the old trembling take possession of her limbs. Had he again seen Zillah, or had he heard—

"Oh! nothing," she answered, with assumed lightness, "only accidents do sometimes occur."

He threw himself into a chair and was silent, but she saw that he was changed—a deepening gloom spread itself over his features and he signed heavily from time to time.

Madeline hung over him, smoothed his hair with caressing touch, almost dreading further speech.

"Are there any letters for me?" he asked, rousing himself with evident effort.

"Yes, they have just come. I put them away for you here till your return."

She went to the bureau, opened it and brought them to him. For the first time in their wedded life he had given her no embrace, uttered no kind or affectionate words of greeting. As he took the letters from her hand she whispered, falteringly:

"I cannot bear this suspense, Bertram; something has happened, or why are you so changed to me?"

"What do you think could happen?" he said, with a fitful, cruel smile. "Does your conscience already reproach you? What do you fear?"

He had broken the seal of one of the letters by this time and was reading it rapidly through. It was from his lawyer, Sebastian Clarke, and it ran thus:

"Lincoln's Inn Fields, July 8th, 18—

"DEAR DUKE.—Since we last saw you we have received a somewhat mysterious communication from Messrs. Ferret and Flint that will require serious consideration ere replying to. As there seems a good deal to explain I shall have the pleasure of waiting upon you early the following morning, when I can better break in person news which is of vital importance to yourself and family.

"I remain, my dear duke, very truly yours,

"SEBASTIAN CLARKE.

"To the Duke of Clydale."

"What on earth can it all mean?" cried the duke, flinging the letter to Madeline. "I've heard all sorts of mysterious reports, they go so far as to deny that you, my wife, are Prince Anatole's daughter."

"His adopted daughter," said Madeline, breathing heavily.

"Why was I never told that before?"

"He ordered it to be kept a secret from the world—he did not wish it generally known that his illegitimate child had fled, was lost, and supposed to be dead. I took her place in his heart and home."

"Great heavens! this is awful," cried the duke, aghast at all he had heard and which this letter implied. "Then he has a daughter—the papers are full of it—a famous artiste."

And now Madeline meeting his eyes read something awful and undefinable in them that terrified her.

"Bertram, dearest, why do you look at me like that?"

He laughed with savage violence and put her from him with cold disdain.

"You and Lady Alesia are base and treacherous women."

"Bertram!"

She was kneeling by his side, clinging to him in frantic terror.

"You have deceived me. You are not the heiress to the Anatole lands. The prince's daughter comes for her rights, which she shall have."

"She has no rights, she is illegitimate, she is lawless, wicked, wild by nature; she lied, and he put me in her place."

"By Heavens, you lie!" he said, in terrible tones. "They have waited patiently till now when all is in readiness to defy you, and the story is on a thousand tongues—my name is dragged in the mire through you."

"The girl has no claim," said Madeline, more quietly, after his fury had spent itself, "the real heir is Michael—the prince married a gipsy woman years before he visited Arabia. I only knew this after I was your wife, and he foregoes his claim and is satisfied with a sum sufficient for his wants."

The duke looked at her with that contemptuous pity that cuts to the soul, but her spirit had risen in presence of this awful danger.

She too was haughty and nonchalant as she met the tragedy of her life.

"It is all a plant to extort money," she said, bitterly.

But neither of them as yet had named Zillah.

(To be Continued.)



[A PLEASANT RECEPTION.]

THE BELLE OF COVERACK.

(A COMPLETE STORY.)

CHAPTER I.

RIVALS FOR HER LOVE.

TREBEE farm-house stands upon the lofty, bleak headland to the south of Coverack Cove, and in the principal room of this homestead on the June morning when we look in upon her sits Jennifer Tregowan, our heroine.

Very lovely is sweet Jennifer, and, unhappily for the peace of mind of the youths of Coverack, she is fully conscious of the power of her charms.

But how could she be otherwise when from her infancy she had been called beautiful, and when, from the time that she attained to womanhood, she has been known far and wide as the belle of Coverack?

Artists wandering about the Cornish coast in search of fine scenery have not been slow to discover the fair maid of Coverack, and many have been the efforts which some of them have made to induce her to sit for her portrait.

But Jennifer was neither to be persuaded nor bribed to have her face copied upon canvas; her brother and her grandmother with whom she lived, and David Pendarves, who was the most favoured among her many suitors, had never heard of such a proposal without expressing the strongest disapproval, and so Jennifer had shaken her head and had run away whenever a suggestion of the kind was made.

The events of the last week, however, have brought about a great change in sweet Jennie's ideas upon this subject, and she sits this morning at the table aimlessly playing with a spoon and a basin of soft sugar that stands before her, while she wonders a little nervously what her grandmother and her brother Fred will say if it come to their ears that after all that has been said upon the subject she has promised Mr. Edwin Hathaway to let him paint her portrait.

Of course, David Pendarves would be furious, that she quite expected, but she thought with a mischievous smile that a little excitement and uncertainty would do David a great deal of good.

He had taken matters too much for granted, the exacting beauty thought, with a toss of her pretty head; he had never asked her to be his wife, nor had she ever made any promise to that effect, and yet he assumed a certain air of proprietorship over her, and whenever the future was spoken of he seemed to take it as settled beyond all question that her life and his were to be spent together.

Once this assumption that she belonged to him was very sweet to Jennifer, and her cheeks would flush and her eyelids would droop with conscious pleasure when he took her hand and held it in his own and looked the love his tongue was slow to utter.

But of late this charm has worn away, she wants something more definite, indeed she scarcely knows what she wants, and when she dares to ask herself if she really means to marry David, Mr. Hathaway's handsome face seems to rise up between her and her sailor lover, and she gives a little shiver, which is the only answer she can make to the question.

She knows that her brother and her grandmother both regard her marriage with David as an event which must inevitably take place in the near future. For David has made no secret of his hopes to them, and he is well to do in the world, while Jennifer, on her part, has always shown a marked preference for the handsome young sailor.

His mother owns the small farm upon which she lives, and though he himself is only mate of the May Queen, he has a share in her, and will before long become her captain, and a man with such prospects might well be considered a good match for a girl who would only bring him a hundred pounds upon her wedding day.

All this and much more Jennifer knew, and she would have bitterly resented the imputation that she would not some day become David's wife, had any one else hinted it, but her foolish

little head was somewhat turned with vanity, and while she would not wilfully have done any one a wrong, she had not the least objection to inflicting a little pain upon a man who loved her.

Besides, she liked to be admired; what pretty girl does not? Moreover, she liked compliments, particularly such delicately implied compliments as those which Mr. Hathaway paid her, and the artist's wooing—if wooing it could be called—was so unlike that of poor David Pendarves that it seemed to her unsophisticated mind like a poem full of melody compared to the dry, unmusical utterances of a country schoolboy's prose.

There was danger in this new element that had come into her life, and Jennifer knew it well, but instead of being daunted she rather revelled in the excitement, and, having no doubt of herself or of her own ability to steer clear of pitfalls, she felt sure that she could dance safely along the brow of the precipice and enjoy the novelty of danger.

She has spent a full quarter of an hour in stirring up the contents of the sugar basin and smoothing the sugar flat again, and she would have gone on with the profitless task much longer if her grandmother had not looked up at her curiously and asked:

"Do you fancy you're making hasty pudding in that basin, Jin?"

"No, granny, I was thinking," was the startled reply.

Then she added, with a laugh, "But I mustn't waste all the morning like this. There's the bread to bake, and the cream to scald, and dinner to cook; and then I want to go for a walk. I must get about my work at once—this will never do."

And she put the sugar-basin in the cupboard, called the servant, gave her various directions, and was soon as busy as any housewife need be.

Her grandmother watched her as she thus bustled about.

The girl was the cause of much anxiety to the old lady.

"Handsome is that handsome does," was old

Mrs. Tregowan's ever-ready reply, when any injudicious neighbour praised the beauty of her grandchild.

But though nothing would make Mrs. Tregowan admit in so many words that Jennifer was better looking than any of her companions, she recognised the fact herself, and was proud of it, even while it frightened her lest the fair face should lead its owner astray.

Drowsy and half blind as Mrs. Tregowan was, she was sufficiently wide awake this morning to watch Jennifer narrowly, and to try to gather from the girl's actions the subject of her thoughts.

"What are you in such a hurry about?" she asked, after a time, as the girl ran in and out of the dairy and the kitchen, in which was the huge oven.

"I've so much to do," was the reply.

"There's time enough between this and one o'clock," was the next remark.

"Yes, but I want to get out this lovely morning. I can't bear to stay in the house when the weather is fine. 'Tisn't as if we had a garden close to the house like other folks."

"No, 'twould be a nice garden that was planted up here," returned the older woman, almost harshly; "we've enough to do to keep on our feet and to save ourselves from being blown away outside the four walls when the wind's wild; but you'll not find a more cosy house in Coverack for all that, and I've lived here for fifty years without a garden nearer than the foot of the steps, and 'twas good enough for your mother if 'tain't good enough for you."

"I wasn't grumbling, granby, dear. I only said I wanted to go out," returned Jennifer, brightly.

Then she left the room in obedience to a call from the servant, and the old woman was left alone.

Though Mrs. Tregowan thought Trebeer perfect in its way, few people with more modern tastes than hers would agree with the old lady.

Viewed from the outside, the homestead presented the appearance of four high granite walls built in the form of a square, and without a single window to show that the interior was used as a habitation.

A doorway on the most sheltered side led into a courtyard, and then it could be observed that a dwelling-house occupied one of the four sides of the square inside the wall, while the other three sides were formed of cow and cattle sheds and other farm buildings.

That the peculiar structure of this residence made it in winter and in stormy weather a secure retreat from the wind and rain that sometimes drove upon the coast, and made it well nigh impossible for a strong man to keep his feet on the unsheltered hill outside, was undeniable, but that it ever could be a cheerful place in summer was more than even old Mrs. Tregowan herself would have ventured to assert.

For from no aperture in the house could sea or land be seen. Every window looked out upon the small courtyard and the farm buildings that occupied the other three sides of the enclosure.

Beyond the four walls, however, the world was altogether a different world to that which could be seen from the windows. Inside everything seemed cabin'd, cribbed, confined. Outside the view—north, south, east, and west—was only bounded by the horizon.

To the right, if you stand facing the south, the coast is black and jagged, rugged, and inhospitable. The eye ranges from one bold promontory of stupendous cliffs to another, and all along the base white-crested waves dash themselves into foam and spray unceasingly.

To the left, sheltered by the headland on which you stand, lies Coverack Cove, with its tiny refuge for fishing boats and any other small craft that may seek shelter within it, and behind it is the curious little village nesting under the hill, a heap of huts and cottages piled indiscriminately together, and farther away to the left is Manacle Point, off which may be seen the Manacles, a dangerous group

of rocks—a constant source of peril to ships passing up and down the Channel, and the home of myriads of sea-fowl.

It was scarcely to be wondered at, therefore, that Jennifer should be anxious to get her household duties over this bright June morning, and escape from the prison-like confinement of the house to the full enjoyment of the broad expanse beyond the outer wall.

As I have said, Trebeer stood on the very brow of the promontory, but from this eminence, particularly on the side towards the cove, the land sloped more or less gradually to the sea, forming banks and terraces sparsely covered with gorse and heather and coarse herbage, amongst which colts and cows and sheep found scanty pasture, while at the bottom of the hill and not more than twenty feet above the sea a belt of land, reclaimed from the waste, repaid the labour of man by producing fruit and vegetables in great abundance.

One of the gardens Jennifer called her own, but it was a full quarter of a mile from the singularly substantial house in which she lived.

The greater part of the headland near the point where Trebeer farm stood belonged to the Tregowans, but land running down to the shore, or extending to the extreme edge of beetling cliffs, has its disadvantages; some public path, if only a coast-guard walk, must go through it, and therefore it can never be looked upon as absolutely private property, and it was not at all unusual for strangers to treat Trebeer exactly as they would any open heath or moor.

But we must return to Jennifer, who has scalded her cream, and baked her bread, and put the dinner cooking, and then, having cautioned the servant to look well after the oven, has dressed herself and hurried down to her own particular garden. She could not tell you if you asked her why she was in such haste this morning.

But that she is in a hurry nobody can doubt. She has dressed herself in a white morning gown, trimmed with sapphire-blue ribbons, and a woman's eye would detect that the bright bows had been sewn on too hastily and that the wide sash, falling so carelessly, was awry.

No man would observe it, however, and it was for a man's eyes that this garment had been donned.

There was no man to be seen when Jennifer made her way down the side of the hill, and so the servant sent out by Mrs. Tregowan to watch the girl reported,

"Miss Jennifer's only looking after her flowers, ma'am," Maggie reported to the old woman; "she be rare fond of flowers be Miss Jennifer, and she be the fairest flower in all the garden."

"Don't talk foolishness, Maggie," retorted old Mrs. Tregowan, severely. "The fairest of us be but as the grass of the field that to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven; don't set too much store upon good looks, Maggie, for they are but lures of the Evil One to lead us into temptation."

Maggie made no verbal reply, but, being remarkably good-looking herself, it is to be feared that she did not take Mrs. Tregowan's admonition to heart in a thankful spirit.

And meanwhile Jennifer—with the greatest possible regard for the spotlessness of her white gown—was tending her flowers and giving some very close attention to her vegetables.

Roses are all very well in their way, but cabbages are much more essential to a working man's dinner, while pens and lettuces are, by no means to be despised.

So Jennifer could find employment enough, and she appeared so much absorbed in her task that she did not look up when the garden gate was opened and a man with a self-assured manner and bearing advanced towards her.

That she was conscious of his approach was only too evident in the heightened colour of her cheeks, but she appeared not to heed his presence, and it was not until he spoke that she looked up with a slight start.

"Good morning, fair Guinevere," said the stranger, lifting his hat politely.

"Good morning, Mr. Hathaway," she retorted, with a bright smile, "but my name is Jennifer, not Guinevere."

"It is all the same, child—Jennifer is only a corruption of the name of King Arthur's queen, who was as much the reigning beauty in Cornwall ages ago as you are now; but I want to tell me when you will give me my first sitting."

"Your first sitting for what?" she asked, in simulated surprise.

"For your portrait; you are not going to draw back after the promise you made me, you don't mean to be as faithless as your namesake surely."

"Why, was Queen Guinevere faithless?" asked Jennifer, wondering.

"Yes, faithless as a woman could be. But don't think of her; look at me and reward my devotion, for I am as faithful as—"

"The sunflower, who turns on her god when he sets."

"The same look as she turned when he rose."

"I don't think much of your simile," laughed Jennifer, "and besides the sunflower in question would seem to be feminine, and I've always heard that constancy is a virtue more often found in women than in men."

"Never mind, I am not good at similes," said the artist, "but when may I begin your portrait? I want to finish it before I go away from Coverack. I should like to have it with me always."

"And you will go away soon I suppose," she answered, vaguely.

"Yes, I must go," he replied, while a strange, passionate light leaped up into his eyes; "but," he added with thrilling earnestness, "it will not be my own fault if I go alone."

She seemed not to hear him, for she made no reply to the words which her womanly instinct told her were full of deepest meaning.

At that moment the face of David Pendravas came up before her mind and her heart smote her with a feeling almost akin to a sense of treachery.

Poor David, he ought to be back in Coverack to-day.

His mother had sent over to Trebeer to say her son was coming home for two days, and to ask the Tregowans to go to her house to tea, and Jennifer felt that at any moment her old admirer might arrive.

Even while she thought of him and before she had answered Edwin Hathaway's question the garden gate swung on its hinges and David himself appeared coming eagerly towards her.

A smothered exclamation that was not a blessing escaped the artist's lips almost before he knew he had thought of it, and the glad smile on David's face turned to a suspicious frown as he advanced and saw that the stranger who stood by Jennifer's side was a town-bred man, and—in his own opinion at least—a gentleman.

But the girl, with a woman's quick intuition, saw the impending storm and hastened to avert it.

"Oh, David, so you have come back," she said, with affected gladness, as she extended her hand. "Your mother sent to tell us you were coming," she went on; "but she didn't know for certain whether it would be to-day or tomorrow."

The sailor was so pleased with the warmth of her greeting that he forgot his jealousy for a moment, and, before the demon could rise in his heart again the girl continued:

"This gentleman is a painter from London, and he wants to find out the prettiest bits on the coast; it's odd that folks from a distance should see so much of what we see every day without noticing it, isn't it?"

But here Mr. Hathaway himself made a remark. Pendravas, a trifle snickily, replied to it, and then Jennifer, seeing that it would not require much to make these two men quarrel, and having for her own part a great desire to keep the peace between them, said:

"Granny will want to see you, David, so you'd best come back with me to dinner, and you may carry that basket for me, if you will."

This gracious permission chased the frowns from the sailor's face, but it irritated the artist so much that it made him imprudently ask:

"Cannot I carry anything for you, Miss Jennifer?"

"No, thank you, but you may have one of the sunflowers you admired so much if you like."

The expression of disgust upon Mr. Hathaway's face was so ludicrous that Jennifer laughed heartily. Then she nodded good morning to him and she and David Pendarves proceeded to climb the hill on the top of which stood Trebeer.

"Who is that popinjay?" asked David of the girl before they were quite out of earshot of the artist.

"Oh, he is a painter, a very great one I've heard," she replied, carelessly; "he seems to spend all his time in fishing and painting."

"Does he? I caught him doing something else," growled Pendarves.

But Jennifer was judiciously deaf to this remark.

On the whole she was not by any means sorry that David had come upon her so suddenly.

It would show Mr. Hathaway that others besides himself thought her worth looking at, and it would at the same time teach David that his own position was not so secure as when Jennifer David would often have found his way to Trebeer.

Poor Jennifer, she was like a wilful child playing with firearms, of the deadly danger of which she was all unconscious.

And meanwhile David Pendarves, slightly jealous and deeply infatuated, walked along by her side, and Edwin Hathaway, mortified and furiously angry, turned off sharply towards the shore.

Hitherto his admiration for Jennifer had been little more than a passing fancy; but now he felt that his honour depended upon carrying her off from the man who had been bold enough to enter the lists with him.

CHAPTER II.

DAVID'S WOOGING.

THOUGH David had the privilege of accompanying Jennifer to the farm-house, and the satisfaction of being warmly received there by her grandmother and brother, he was not altogether in an enviable frame of mind.

That strange artist's presence disturbed him terribly, and though he was too generous to ask any further questions about him, and would not under any circumstances have done so before Fred Tregowan, who guarded his sister jealously, he was still uncomfortable if not unhappy.

But dinner was soon on the table, and David was bidden to draw near and take his place.

It was a substantial, savoury repast. A huge meat pie, flanked by potatoes and cabbages, and followed by a currant tart and a large bowl of clotted cream, rich and sweet enough to tempt the appetite of the greatest epicure.

This meal, washed down with home-brewed ale, was nearly disposed of when David said:

"Mother wants you all to come over to-morrow afternoon, for I must get back to Plymouth again the day after."

"The children can go, but I'm getting too old to be gadding about," replied Mrs. Tregowan.

"Ay, I'll come, but 'won't be till tea time," replied Fred Tregowan; "so you'd best come over early and fetch Jennifer, and I'll bring her back after supper. But what's the news abroad, David?"

"There isn't any news that I know of," was the reply; "I'm going to have a rise after this voyage. I've passed my examination for master, and old Hosking means to give up sea-faring after this trip, so it is the last time I go as mate in the May Queen."

"And you'll be captain of her?" asked the old woman, eagerly.

"Yes," he replied, while his eyes wandered towards Jennifer. "I'll be captain and part owner, and then—"

He hesitated so long that Fred Tregowan, to whom he had often talked of his hopes with regard to the young beauty, interrupted laughingly.

"And then you'll be taking a wife, I suppose. I say, Jennifer, look here. David's talking of getting married—tisn't leap year, else you might ask him to wed you."

Jennifer tossed her head with dignified disdain, but David hastened to say:

"Jennifer knows that the asking will be on the other side."

But the girl, on hearing this, ran off to her own room, from which she showed no inclination to emerge.

Mrs. Tregowan, after her heavy meal, leaned back in the large arm chair that was almost as old as herself, and quietly indulged in her after-dinner nap, and Fred suggested to his companion that they should go out and look about them.

David readily assented; he and Fred Tregowan had been friends and companions as boys, and though he was the elder by three or four years there was so much good fellowship between them that even if there had been no Jennifer David would often have found his way to Trebeer.

Having passed safely through a large brood of young turkeys without treading upon any of the little creatures, and having sadly upset the equanimity of an old hen who was unusually anxious about the welfare of her chickens, the two young men made their way outside the stone walls to enjoy the far extended view of coast, sea, and sky.

"I'm getting heartily tired of this place," said Fred Tregowan, wearily, "and as soon as granny dies and Jennifer is married I shall emigrate to Australia or New Zealand."

"It will be a risky thing," objected David; "the land about here is not rich, but it's your own, remember, and you'll find it harder to work for another man than for yourself."

"That's all very well," returned Fred, "but what's the use of working here? Look at the soil, the rock comes up to the surface, and the vegetation isn't enough to fatten donkeys on. Down where I've reclaimed the sheltered places a bit it's different, I grant, but there's such a lot of waste. I'd ever so much rather have a farm a quarter the size if 'twas only fertile than this barren place, though it looks big, and though folks do talk of its beauty, and all that."

"There I don't agree with you, but if you ever do sell the place you'd better let me have the first chance. Then there'll be a home for you to come back to; that is if Jennifer will have me. I don't know where I'll go if she won't."

"Oh, she'll have you safe enough," replied Fred, with a brother's calm assurance; "she's a bit skittish, that's all, but she's a good little thing, is Jennifer, and she would be better if folks did not turn her head with vanity and conceit. There's some artist fellow loafing about that I don't like the look of; but one can't be uncivil to strangers."

"He was talking with Jennifer this morning. Who is he?"

"Who he is I can't tell you. He lodges with old Bray, the coastguardsman, and he hires a boat, and when he isn't painting he goes fishing. I had the ill-luck to upset him in the cove a day or two after he came here. Of course he wasn't any the worse for his ducking, but it set up a kind of acquaintance between us, and he does all he can to run after Jennifer."

"And you think she doesn't care for him?" asked David, anxiously.

"Care for him—she isn't a fool!" was the contemptuous retort.

By this time they had walked down through the village to the cove that was a good half-a-mile from the farm, and many of David Pendarves's acquaintances among the boatmen and fishermen came to exchange a word of greeting with him.

There were several strangers in Coverack at this time—not fashionable people, but men who loved sea-fishing, and did not mind putting up with rough-and-ready accommodation. Most of them, of course, were bachelors, but two or three of the older men had brought their wives and daughters with them to enjoy the sport that is here exceptionally good.

Besides those who had come for fishing and

boating, there were a few geologists, one or two artists, and also a few people who seemed to have no particular vocation in life except to get comfortably and pleasantly through it.

And Coverack is a capital place for this kind of thing when the weather is fine.

There is no railroad within a dozen miles, nor any regular means of communication with the nearest town. There are no assembly rooms, no more or less indifferent bands, no greedy, extortionate lodging-house keepers, no land sharks of any kind.

The place is primitive in the extreme. There is no shipping and no port, for the coast is terribly dangerous, and, as I said above, one of the most dreaded parts of the wild Cornish coast. Manacle Point juts far out into the sea close at hand, while the cruel Manacles protrude from the water, their sharp, black, ragged heads crowded with sea-birds for a mile or more beyond its furthest extremity.

In fine weather boats and small steamtugs may approach these half-submerged rocks, but woe to the vessel that gets near them in a storm, for her fate in any case is inevitably sealed.

But Coverack is a delightful retreat for those who wish to get as far as possible from "the madding crowd," for, although excursion steamers from Plymouth and Falmouth occasionally make their way here, the difficulty of landing, to say nothing of the scarcity of accommodation in the place, prevents the visitors from being very numerous or from staying more than an hour or two.

A stone quay built in a semi-circular form affords shelter to a few fishing-boats, but harbour there is none, and wild tales are told of terrible shipwrecks that have occurred in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Hathaway had recovered his good temper by the time the two young men had walked down to the quay.

He was preparing to go out for a night's fishing, and was busily engaged in arranging his tackle and in giving orders to his men.

Directly he caught sight of Fred Tregowan he called and asked if he would not like to go with him.

"No, thank you," was the reply, "I've got a friend here who is only home for a day or two."

"Perhaps your friend will come too," was the polite suggestion. "The boat is big enough, and the more the merrier."

But David declined, remarking that he got quite enough of the sea when on duty, and then, some little time later, Edwin Hathaway, accompanied by a boatman and his son, sailed out of the tiny cove.

No doubt it was well that he had gone, for had he remained on shore he would have sought Jennifer Tregowan as the needle flies to the magnet, and such a proceeding on his part would, I am afraid, under present circumstances, have led to a breach of the peace.

He was conscious of this, and prudence, as well as irritation, took him out upon the deep to-night.

It was true that he would have liked to take David with him, because by so doing he would keep him out of Jennifer's way, but he consoled himself with the assurance that his rival would soon be obliged to depart and leave the coast clear for him.

"I don't believe she will make him any promise," he muttered to himself, as his boat shot away from the quay, and David and Fred stood watching him.

"And if she does," he added, cynically, "a woman's word is soon broken, and she would not be the first whose conscience I have found elastic."

It began to blow a gale that night, and the artist and his boatman, with their funny spuds, did not return to Coverack quite as soon as they had expected, but they came back a couple of days later, having narrowly escaped with their lives more by good luck than by any efforts they were able to make for themselves.

They had succeeded in running their boat into a small inlet of the iron-bound coast some miles

from Coverack, but had been too exhausted to return home for many hours.

And when they did arrive at Coverack Mr. Hathaway was not a little disgusted to find that his absence had not created the least sensation.

The boatman was so often absent for days together that his wife hardly gave the matter a thought, and, as for the artist, no one in Coverack took the least interest in him save Jennifer Tregowan, and she did not even know of his having gone out fishing.

For David did not return to Trebeer to tea, but went home to his mother's house and took Fred with him.

The following day the sailor came over to fetch Jennifer, but not a word was said by anybody about Mr. Hathaway.

The weather was boisterous and stormy and it was not possible to walk across the open downland with any comfort.

The young couple, therefore, had to take the road, which, though it runs along at the top of the hill part of the way, is not exposed to the wind because it is protected on both sides by rough walls built of huge blocks of granite placed one on the other without any cement.

These rude structures are very common in Cornwall and are there called hedges.

David took Jennifer's hand and led her along like a child, as Cornishmen are wont to do with those who are dear to them, and she kept close by his side.

But they could not talk much, for the wind and the roar of the sea dashing at the foot of the cliffs drowned their voices and made conversation impossible.

Their walk was not a long one, however, and when they reached Mrs. Pendarves's house that worthy matron led Jennifer up to her own room and there took her in her arms and looked at her steadily and critically, and after a long scrutiny said, in a tone of relief:

"Yes, I think you'll be true."

Jennifer would have resented this conduct if she had known how to resent anything that Mrs. Pendarves might take it into her head to do.

But that was the difficulty.

David's mother always spoke and acted as though her judgment could never be at fault and as though her individual opinion must outweigh any amount of reason that could be urged against it.

And David believed in his mother implicitly, and that, of course, made it all the more difficult for the girl to suggest that his parent was not quite perfect.

Having thus uttered her opinion about Jennifer's constancy, however, Mrs. Pendarves became very kind and motherly towards her.

She called the girl "my dear," she once went so far as to call her "my child," and she smoothed her dark hair, arranged her collar, fastened a splendid rose in the bosom of her dress, and then led her downstairs to the best parlour with great ceremony.

All of this was very embarrassing to Jennifer Tregowan, for she was not quite sure of herself, and the best parlour was of all the rooms in the house the least comfortable.

In the winter when a fire could be lighted it was bad enough, but now it looked cold and formal and chilling, while the storm that was raging made it impossible for them to go out in the garden.

So here they seated themselves, Mrs. Pendarves taking the stiff horsehair arm-chair and bidding Jennifer to sit on the sofa.

On this sofa, after a time, David also managed to find a seat, and still Mrs. Pendarves's inquiries about the welfare of everything animate and inanimate at Trebeer continued without any sign of weariness, at least on her part.

But even this came to an end at last and the matron rose to her feet and said she would go and see if tea was ready.

"Let me come and help you," said the girl, springing up.

But Mrs. Pendarves declined to be accompanied and then Jennifer felt that the time had come when she must accept or refuse David's love.

A month ago she would have had no doubt about her decision.

Now she blushed at her own vanity and weakness.

And then she felt a strong man's arm clasp her waist and she was conscious that the hitherto silent David was telling her in impassioned tones how dearly and how truly he loved her.

She listens, she does not repulse him; nay, after much eager entreaty upon his part, she at length kisses him, and then she feels that Mr. Hathaway has gone altogether out of her life, and she resolves to forget him and to let no shadow of doubt come between her and the brave, true heart at her side.

When at length tea was announced—and rarely does tea take so long in brewing—Mrs. Pendarves was told of her son's happiness, and she embraced the blushing girl and called her her own dear daughter; and thus it happened that when Fred Tregowan put in his tardy appearance he found matters going on as satisfactorily as could be desired.

"I hear there's a ship gone ashore near the Lizard," he remarked, as he helped himself to a piece of hot buttered cake; "I hope you'll take good care not to run your ship ashore in that way, David."

"I hope not," was the reply, "but there's danger on land as well as at sea. What are you looking so serious about, Jennifer?"

"I was thinking how anxious I shall be when I hear the storms raging," she replied, timidly; "do you always mean to be a sailor?"

He clasped her hand tightly in gratitude for her sympathy with him, then he said:

"No, I want to go a few more voyages and make some money, and then we will buy a farm and settle down near mother if you like."

"Better buy mine," suggested Fred.

"You'll never want a home while I have one, Jennifer," here interposed Mrs. Pendarves, somewhat irrelevantly. "When you are David's wife you must live with me, I want to gain a daughter and not to lose a son."

Jennifer smiled, and David kissed his mother tenderly, for he knew, though the others might not guess it, that the proud, masterful old woman had made great concessions this day for the sake of her son's happiness.

And thus the evening passed off pleasantly, though the storm still raged furiously outside the house.

The lovers might have preferred having an opportunity for a little private conversation, but this was not granted them; as it was, however, time passed so quickly that they were rather startled in the middle of supper by Fred observing that it was nine o'clock and they ought to be already on their way home.

Mrs. Pendarves, intent upon meriting her son's gratitude, suggested that her guests should remain with her till the morning, but neither Fred nor Jennifer would consent to this. They were not afraid of the storm, it was not like a winter blast, and it would take much more than this to keep them from returning to their grandmother.

So brother and sister said good night, refusing David's escort, and soon reached Trebeer in safety.

The next morning David came over to say good bye to Jennifer.

"I shall be away at least six months, my darling," he said, tenderly, "for we're going to the West Indies, but when I come back you'll marry me, won't you, dearest?"

"Yes," she replied, "but you'll write to me before then."

"Of course I will; but don't flirt with that artist fellow any more, Jennifer."

"The artist? I'd forgotten there was such a man," she replied, with a shiver; "you're not jealous of him, David?"

"No, my trust in you is too great for that, darling."

Then he kissed her, and after many embraces and promises they parted.

But Jennifer felt that she had not been as true at heart as she had been in words, and she despised herself accordingly.

And David went to Plymouth, where he joined

the May Queen, in which he was about to make a longer voyage than usual.

CHAPTER III.

HOW EDWIN HATHAWAY FARED.

DAVID has gone away, Mr. Hathaway has come back, and to all outward seeming little or no change has taken place in any of the actors in this small drama. In very truth, however, great changes have come upon them all.

More particularly was this the case with Jennifer.

Very politely but very firmly she withdrew her promise to let Mr. Hathaway paint her portrait.

"My brother and my grandmother would both of them object to it," she said, resolutely, "and I was very foolish to promise you, sir."

"You mean that the big sailor, who looked as though he would like to eat you, would be angry," said the artist, beside himself with rage.

"Did he look so hungry?" asked Jennifer, with a laugh.

"Hungry! He was another of your admirers, I suppose."

"Do you? Well, I'll wish you good afternoon, Mr. Hathaway," and so saying Jennifer tripped lightly along the cliff path, where this conversation had taken place.

But the artist followed her, and he asked, eagerly:

"You have not told me, Jennifer, do you really care for that sailor?"

"Do you think I care for anybody?" she asked, tauntingly.

"No, by Heaven! I don't think you do, unless it be for yourself," he returned, hotly and angrily.

The next instant she was far ahead of him, and he saw no more of fair Jennifer that day.

Not indeed for many days.

It was hard for a girl so used to admiration and so accustomed to act coquettishly to settle down to the decorous condition of an engaged young woman, and Jennifer doubted her own power of self-repression much more than any man or woman doubted her.

She wished to do right, she wished to think and feel rightly, and because she wanted to realize that David loved her and to have him constantly before her mind she made a practice of going over to Mrs. Pendarves whenever she could find time, and the two women would sit together, hand in hand, and talk about the absent one who was so dear to both of them.

But Mr. Hathaway was not to be disposed of in this manner.

He lay in wait for Jennifer, and he reproached her for her broken promise, but as this had little effect he talked of his love for her, and then he adroitly spoke of the life which in London the woman he loved would lead.

It was all very fascinating.

Music and flowers and dancing, lovely dresses, beautiful faces, the incense which rising genius would cast at her feet, all this he painted in vivid language, and thus he went on, careless of how little truth he uttered provided his words would pass muster until the girl's imagination and vanity were fired.

The life thus depicted was widely different to what Jennifer's life would be if she wedded David Pendarves, and David was away, and Edwin Hathaway with his refined manners and handsome face was on the spot.

Don't be hard upon her in your judgment, but pity her, rather, for being exposed to such temptation.

And Jennifer was tempted.

All that was sensuous and indolent and selfish in her nature seemed to rise up in sympathy with the tempter, and though the girl shut herself up in her own room, or carefully avoided leaving the house for whole days at a time, she never ventured abroad without meeting the man who was bent on her destruction.

Several weeks passed in this manner, and then

Mr. Hathaway went away from Coverack suddenly without saying good-bye to Jennifer, and she thought half sadly that she should never see him again.

But his absence was a relief.

She could breathe freely. She could wander about as of old, for her other admirers, though numerous, were easily frightened away.

And at this time a present came for Jennifer.

It was a gold ring in a little box which David had bought, and with it came a letter from the sailor begging his future wife to wear this on her finger until he could give her a wedding ring to bear it company.

Our sweet heroine was very proud of this love token and many were the secret kisses which she pressed upon it.

And she wore it always, and had no fear of forgetting David for an instant, for was not his ring ever upon her finger to remind her of the giver?

Thus the summer passed away and October came; now she counted every day that passed, for David was expected home at the end of November, and the wedding was to take place before the middle of December.

All this had been arranged by letter, and old Mrs. Tregowan worked early and late with her knitting needles and fell asleep over them, in making stockings for the bride, and Mrs. Pendarves turned her house out from garret to cellar and bought new furniture and made such changes in her homestead as had not been made since she herself came to it as a bride.

Jennifer herself was very busy.

Her needle must indeed be swift to get through half the sewing that had to be done, and at last in sheer despair she had to employ others to help her.

Lately the weather has been rough and boisterous, and going out for walks on the cliffs or even inland was an exercise that could bring with it but little pleasure, and, as I have said, Jennifer had been too busy for such indulgence.

This afternoon, however, she announces her intention of going down to the village to see one of the young women who were doing some sewing for her.

"Wait till to-morrow," expostulated her grandmother, "there is a wind blowing fit to take you off your feet; we'll have some wrecks to-night if my dreams be worth anything."

Wrecks!

The idea made Jennifer start with sudden apprehension, then she smiled in self-derision, only the wreck of one ship could affect her, and old Captain Hosking and David both knew the Cornish coast too well to venture near it in such a gale.

But the very suggestion made her restless and eager to get out of the securely sheltered home-stead.

She must go and look at the sea and must go down to the village and hear what the boatmen and coastguardmen thought of the prospects for the night.

As I have previously said the worst part of the road was sheltered by the stone hedges, but for all that it was not without much difficulty that Jennifer made her way down to the cove; once or twice, indeed, she had to go on her hands and knees and creep along the ground to evade the force of the driving gusts of wind.

But she reaches the cottage of the seamstress at last, and she sinks down on the first chair offered her, overcome for the moment with fatigue.

When she is a little recovered the woman shows her work, which is pronounced to be satisfactory, then she goes on to observe, with some hesitation:

"There's been a gentleman in the village asking for you, miss."

"For me!" echoed Jennifer. "Who was it—why didn't he come up to Trebeer?"

"I don't know, miss; 'praps the weather made him think you wouldn't come out, but he was dreadful cut up when he heard you was going to be married. Why, there he is, I do declare!"

A gust of wind came in at the open door as

the woman spoke, and Jennifer looking round met the burning gaze and the pale, stern face of Edwin Hathaway.

She uttered no word of surprise or of greeting, she neither rose to her feet nor extended her hand in welcome, for she knew in her heart that he had come to try to disturb her peace of mind, and there was no man under Heaven whom she less wished to see at this moment than the man who stood looking at her with such passionate intentness.

"You are not glad to see me?" he asked, coming a few steps nearer and seeming to tower above her like an angry giant.

"There is no reason for my being either glad or sorry," she replied, coldly and steadily.

"Were you angry at my going away as I did, without saying good-bye?" he next inquired, with repressed eagerness.

"No," she returned, indifferently.

He was stung by her calmness.

Anger or reproaches, or pique, or even dislike, he could have met and endured with composure, but this chilling indifference drove him to madness, and he now threw himself at her feet, exclaiming :

"You know why I am here. I have come to save you from a life of toil and drudgery, from the coarse embraces of a man who is little better than the beasts of the field, and to give you all that the heart of woman can desire. There is yet time for us to get away before you can be missed. I had meant to take you away in a boat, but this confounded storm makes that impossible, but I can have a dog-cart in less than half an hour, in which we can get to Helston, and we shall be on our way to London before morning."

"And why should I go to London?" asked Jennifer, looking round the room for the seamstress, who had disappeared.

"To live with me, to let me teach you what love really is, to let me devote my life to your happiness."

But Jennifer quietly shook her head as she said :

"You are labouring under a strange delusion, Mr. Hathaway; I do not love you, I can never be your wife."

"My wife—"

He paused.

She looked so calmly at him, so steadily, and withal so innocently, that he was shamed into hiding his pitiful purpose from her.

She would not be his wife she said, and he had not meant to offer her that doubtful honour, but it was waste of time to pollute her ears by any sophistry which he could invent, for it was evident she would not listen to him, also, he remembered, such conduct on his part might not be altogether safe, for there were many arms that would be ready to resent an insult offered to the belle of Coverack.

And even while he hesitated a cry of repressed excitement was uttered by a man passing the window on his way down to the quay, and the next instant the seamstress rushed into the room exclaiming :

"There's a ship driving right on shore, and they do say it's the May Queen, but let her be what her will she's bound to go to pieces on the rocks."

CHAPTER IV.

OUT OF THE STORM.

It was only too true.

A vessel was coming in to the inhospitable cove where seventy years ago the Dispatch was shipwrecked, and Major-General Cavendish with more than sixty other officers and soldiers returning home from Corunna perished.

The May Queen, for it was she, struggled bravely against her impending doom, but her struggles were all in vain.

She was homeward bound from the West Indies, and her captain had intended to take her into Plymouth, but the south-easterly gales had driven her out of her course, the fierce gusts of wind had torn her sails to ribbons, and had car-

ried away two of her masts, while the heavy seas had injured her rudder, and she is now driven before the blast an almost helpless wreck.

On shore there is intense excitement.

Some of the men stand watching the doomed vessel through their powerful glasses, as she ploughs her way towards the iron-bound coast; and at intervals they utter ejaculations that only serve to increase the excitement of those standing by.

Others prepare to get out the life-boat and to make all necessary preparations for saving the lives of those on board the ship, for it is quite clear to everybody that the May Queen herself must go to pieces.

In the intense excitement that stirs the heart of every looker-on few think of taking special notice of Jennifer Tregowan.

Her brother is down among the crowd of men, busy with the busiest of them, for he is one of the life-boat's crew, and he has been talking to a sailor who has served under David Pendarves, and was the first to recognise his old vessel, the May Queen.

"We must save David," was Fred Tregowan's thought. "Jennifer and his mother will never hold up their heads again if he is drowned."

And meanwhile Jennifer is standing in the shelter of the seamstress's cottage.

She has tried to venture out, but the wind flung her back against the door, and now she stands at the window looking out, as well as the spray-covered glass will let her at the vessel that is labouring so heavily in the terrible sea.

Jennifer is very pale, and her eyes have a fixed stare in them that is scarcely natural.

But she utters no word of fear or of anxiety, only her hand clutches the top of a chair so convulsively that anything more fragile would break with such a grip.

Signals of distress have come from the crippled vessel, and now the life-boat is manned and launched, and the heroic crew try to take her out through the angry surf.

Over and over again they make the attempt and are driven back.

There is danger of their being dashed against the stone work of the quay, and of a hole being knocked in the side of the boat, for the tide has set in, and each succeeding breaker leaps over the thick masonry, and it seems as if the whole structure must inevitably be washed away.

Time after time the brave men in the boat struggle against wind and tide, but the breakers are too much for them, the boat is capsized, and though it is got back to shore comparatively uninjured, one of the brave fellows who had manned her is lost.

This throws a gloom over the survivors, though again they prepare the boat and get ready lines and rockets, for it is still doubtful as to where the vessel will strike.

If she can keep well away from the Wrea rocks and the Manacles, and drive right into the cove, the crew may by little less than a miracle be saved, but if she strikes upon any of the outlying rocks she must go to pieces long before help can reach her.

Edwin Hathaway stands silently by Jennifer's side in the rude cottage, his eyes also strained to watch the unhappy vessel.

He does not know how dear the life of one on board her is to the girl at his side, he is watching the raging sea and the disabled ship with the eye of an artist, wishing he could transfer the scene to canvas there and then, but the warring elements awe him in spite of himself, and something in Jennifer's face, something in her seeming unconsciousness of his existence keeps him from making any further effort to urge his suit.

At length he speaks to her, but she does not hear him.

The vessel is coming nearer, it seems as though it were making right for the quay, and Jennifer knows too well that to do so means utter destruction.

From where she stands she cannot see the efforts made to launch the life-boat, but her anxiety changes from the calmness which seems like despair to a wild fever heat that impels her to instant action.

What cares she for the wind and the rain that is now driving in from the sea?

She will stay here idle no longer, and she rushes wildly towards the door.

In her anxiety for David she had forgotten Edwin Hathaway, though he was all the time so close to her side, and when he entreated her not to venture out into the storm, and even placed his hand upon her arm to prevent her doing so, she looked at him wonderingly at first, but this wonder gave way to anger as she said :

" Go away, Mr. Hathaway, and never dare to speak to me again. David is on board that ship ; if he dies I shall die ! Go away, sir, I hate you."

Before Hathaway had recovered from his surprise at the sudden change in the girl she was gone, and he felt that he could do nothing but follow her.

Knowing every inch of the ground, and having been out in weather quite as tempestuous before now, Jennifer made her way down to the beach sometimes with short runs, but more often by clinging to gates and rails and door posts, until she came to a spot where she could find partial shelter and yet have a more extended view of the terrible scene.

And here she learned the fate of one of the crew of the life-boat, and for a moment she feared the drowned man was her own brother.

She was re-assured on this point, and then with clasped hands and tearless eyes and with a mute prayer upon her lips she sat and waited.

The short October day was drawing to a close, and soon night would come to add the horror of darkness to the perils of the men on that unlucky vessel.

The crew on board her had done all that seamens could do to save themselves and their ship, but all their gallant efforts were in vain.

It was madness to attempt to leave the ship, no boat could live in such a tempest. Two, however, were lowered, but they were both dashed to pieces in a moment, and after that the mist and the rain swept in from the sea and enveloped the unfortunate vessel until she almost looked to those on shore like a phantom ship upon a phantom sea.

Suddenly, above the howling of the wind and the roar of the waves, rose the shrieks of men in deadly peril.

The ship had struck heavily on the low reef of rocks that fringed the shore of the cove furthest from the village, while every incoming wave washed over her hull, and the crew, who had taken to the rigging, were in danger every instant of being washed away.

One stout swimmer tried to reach a place of safety by dint of sheer strength and skill, but the cruel waves made all his struggles useless, and at last flung him bleeding and dead within a foot or two of the place he had sought as a refuge.

The others clung to the rigging, while their long and piercing cries for help were almost drowned in the roar of the tempest.

Again the lifeboat is launched, and this time with more success, for she gets clear of the ground surf, and her crew pull heartily and steadily towards the wreck. But what a sea it is to pull through. What a mere cockle-shell does the life-boat seem as it is tossed from the base to the crest of a wave, then is lost again as though it were going to be engulfed, while the men expend their strength almost in vain, so little way do they make.

Jennifer's prayers now are breathed for her brothers as well as her lover, for both are exposed to the perils of the deep.

Little by little, however, the boat makes way, for the brave hearts that man her are not to be daunted, but more than an hour elapses before they reach the wreck, and by that time a man and a boy have grown numb and weary and have been torn from their hold by the cruel waves.

Among those still left Fred finds David Pendarves, but the young man is unconscious or dead, and he would have been washed away like the others if he had not taken the precaution of lashing himself to the rigging.

" He's dead," said one of the boat's crew ; " 'tis no use taking he."

" Dead or alive I don't go back without him," returned Fred Tregowan, grimly.

So he had his way ; all the survivors, some of them still conscious, were got into the life-boat, and then they turned to regain the shore.

Going back was hardly less difficult than coming out, and their care and skill and powers of endurance were taxed to the uttermost, but they succeeded at last and a glad shout of triumph from the bystanders welcomed them as they skillfully beach the boat.

Eager and willing hands are extended to the shipwrecked mariners.

All the villagers are hospitable and one poor fellow after another is offered a temporary home, but when they lift David Pendarves out of the boat men shake their heads as they feel his pulse and try to detect the faintest indication of the beating of his heart—to all appearance he is dead.

But Jennifer Tregowan has made her way to the life-boat.

Her hat has been blown from her head, her long hair falls wildly about her, the spray dashes every now and again over the quay and drenches her through and through ; but she takes no heed of aught that happens to herself—she is seeking for her lover, and when at last she sees him and hears the verdict upon him, she throws herself wildly upon his breast as he lies on the ground, and, regardless of spectators, regardless of the cold and the wet and the driving rain, she presses her own warm lips to his frozen ones in the mad, vain hope of imparting some of her life to him.

Suddenly she starts to her feet, exclaiming :

" He is not dead ! I won't have him left like this—it is murder ! Quick, quick, take him up to the lifeboat-house, and come quickly, one of you, and give me the society's rules for bringing back to life the nearly drowned. Oh, Fred, help to carry him, don't let him die like this. Oh, don't, if you love me !"

Her appeal was immediately responded to, though the men feared all their efforts would be in vain.

Fred and Edwin Hathaway together carried the senseless man to the place provided for such cases, and then with the help of two brawny fishermen they began their work.

For a long time their exertions had no effect, and they were about to desist from the unprofitable task when the patient gave a faint sign of life.

After this they worked on with redoubled zeal, and at last the man who had been looked upon as dead gasped painfully, opened his eyes, and gazed wondering around him.

" Twas Jennifer Tregowan who saved him," was the unanimous verdict of those who witnessed the exciting scene ; " but for her he'd have been put aside as dead, and before long he would have been what he seemed."

But David lives, and in a few days he is able to eat and drink and get about as briskly as of old.

He will not hear of the wedding-day being postponed when Fred suggests it, and he half promises to give up the sea as a profession, but his wife he must have, and that without delay.

And Jennifer gives a blushing, willing assent, she never doubts now that her love has always been given to David, and that nothing but foolish vanity made her listen for a moment to the flattery of Mr. Hathaway.

As for Edwin Hathaway himself he went back to London a sadder if not a wiser man.

He had flattered himself all along that Jennifer loved him and would gladly fly to his arms if he but once said " Come."

Her decided rejection of him, however, and her undisguised and passionate love for her sailor lover, drove the last vestige of this conceit out of the artist's head, and an hour after David's recovery he went away, feeling that henceforth

in his wanderings Coverack was a place to be avoided.

Jennifer Tregowan, the belle of Coverack, became the bride of David Pendarves upon the appointed day, and he took her away for a fortnight to show her the sights and the wonders of London, but they were both back at Coverack on Christmas Eve, and old Mrs. Pendarves hardly knew which to make the most of—the son who had given her a daughter, or the daughter who had saved for her a son.

THE Baroness Burdett-Coutts, in ameliorating the condition of the poor and deserving fishermen of the United Kingdom, has expended over £100,000.

MR. BURNAND said a neat thing of Sarah Bernhardt ; in consequence of her eccentricities he has christened her " Sal Volatile," and says she is so thin because she lives principally upon French roles.

A GREAT race of carrier pigeons took place in America last month, in which there were a hundred starters. The distance from the starting-point to New York was a hundred and twenty-two miles, and the average time a mile of the first bird was one minute and thirty-one seconds. The average time a mile of the twenty-fifth bird was one minute forty-six and a half seconds.

COCA AS AN ANTIDOTE TO OPIUM.—Professor Palmer recommends coca to those who desire to break themselves of the habit of opium eating, and reports a series of cases which have given the best results. Others have tried it, and have also reported favourably. Coca is an excitant of the nervous system, and as such combats the terrible depression which ensues on suddenly ceasing the habit of opium eating. In many of the cases reported this remedy has effected a cure in a week. In some cases the opium was left off gradually, but Dr. Palmer prefers its sudden cessation. He thinks coca may be employed as a substitute for opium. A dose should be taken every time a strong desire for opium is felt.

THE marriage of the Princess Stéphanie of Belgium with the Archduke Rodolphe of Austria is fixed for the day after the festival of St. Valentine, the 15th of February. The bride is to leave Lachen with her royal parents on the 9th, and go as far as Salzburg, where the ceremony of naturalisation will take place, and the Municipal Council of Vienna will receive and compliment their future Empress. She will reach Vienna on the 11th, but, instead of entering the city, will go straight to the chateau of Schoenbrunn, where a sumptuous suite of apartments has been prepared for her reception.

THE inauguration of the monument to the Prince Imperial on Chislehurst Common will soon take place. The monument consists of a cross in grey granite, placed on a pedestal, which is approached by several steps. Upon the principal face will be the following inscription—of course in French :—" Napoleon, Eugène-Louis-Jean Joseph, Prince Imperial, born at Paris, 16th March, 1856, killed by the enemy in Zululand, 1st June, 1870." The opposite side of the pedestal will have the following extract from the will of the Prince :—" I shall die with a profound feeling of gratitude for Her Majesty the Queen of England, for all the Royal Family, and for the country where I have received, during eight years, so cordial a hospitality."

EX-LORD MAYOR TRUSCOTT spent more during his year of office than any of his predecessors not called upon to provide some great royal entertainment. Alderman Stone found £3,228 sufficient for his year of office. Alderman Lusk spent £3,828. Sir Thomas Owden spent about the same amount. Sir C. Whetham spent less. No mayoralty was more lively than that of Sir Sydney Hedley Waterlow, and he spent £3,606. Ex-Lord Mayor Truscott has spent more than £4,000. Such magnificent munificence calls for some reward ; but there is a prejudice against paying lord mayors for extravagance by granting them titles, and perhaps Ex-Lord Mayor Truscott will miss it after all.

BRIDGED BY HIS LOVE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Clytie Cranbourne," "The Golden Bowl,"
 "Poor Loo," "Bound to the Traws,"
 "Fringed with Fire," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE GOLDEN CLOSE OF LOVE.

WHEN the news of Lady Mabel Marmion's engagement to Lord Dacre reached Lady Killbrook she first of all expressed her astonishment to her husband, with the addition of certain comments that were anything but complimentary to the mature bride and bridegroom, and then, having relieved her feelings in this manner, she sat down and wrote a note of congratulation to her sister-in-law.

This was intended as a sort of olive branch, and in this light Lady Mabel accepted and responded to it.

For Lady Mabel was not vindictive unless it suited her purpose to be so, and she did not wish the world at large to know that she and any of her family were at variance.

Sweet, dignified amiability was Lady Mabel's present role, and she played her part to perfection.

Softened and rendered sympathetic towards her husband's kinswomen, Lady Killbrook would have come to town when she heard of Rosalind's approaching marriage to her ladyship's old favourite, Harry Harcourt.

But Lord Killbrook protested against this step.

He declared that he could not afford it. His Irish tenantry gave him much more trouble than they condescended to pay him rent, and he, one of the best-natured men in the world, was reviled and spoken of as though he had been a modern Nero.

So Lady Killbrook, much against her inclinations, was obliged to remain in the gloomy Irish castle with a ragged and discontented tenantry, who gave nothing and expected all things, about her, and so she tried to content herself with writing an effusive letter to our heroine and wishing her all possible happiness.

But when the news of her son's impending marriage with Lady Hilda Staines reached her, as it did by telegraph from Lord Dunmow, who wanted his mother in London, Lady Killbrook's quiescence came to an end.

"You may stay in this lovely land of fogs, sedition, and famine to be shot if you like," she said to her husband, as she walked into his study with the open telegram in her hand, "but I shall start for London this very day whether you accompany me or not."

Now it so happened that poor Lord Killbrook, who had sacrificed his own comfort and his wife's pleasure for the welfare of his tenantry, had that morning received an anonymous letter threatening his life if he dared to demand rent from anybody or in any way exercise his rights as owner of the soil.

The skull and crossbones at the bottom of this ominous epistle were graphic if they were not artistic, and Lord Killbrook was meditating whether he would put his estates into the hands of an agent and go to live in England, or remain at the post of duty and brave all that the imps of evil could do to him.

His wife's entrance with the news she brought settled the matter, for as soon as he mildly objected that going to England at this juncture would look like cowardice on his part and showed her the letter to enforce his arguments, Lady Killbrook became more resolved and determined than ever.

But her second determination was more sweeping than her first.

She would go to England and she would take her husband with her, and also she mentally resolved that many a long year should pass before either she or her husband should again

offer themselves as targets in their native land for those who envied or hated them.

So a good resident landlord was driven away and all the benefit which Lady Hilda's wealth would have brought to the Killbrook estates was diverted to a safer and more remunerative channel.

Arrived in London, however, Lady Killbrook forgot the troubles and dangers she had happily escaped from.

She took a furnished house in Belgravia and she hastened without delay to call upon the three brides elect.

Lady Hilda Staines naturally engaged her first attention.

The earl's daughter received her future mother-in-law with cordial affection, but she disappointed and somewhat shocked her by observing:

"I am not going to be married with the usual display of white satin and favours and orange blossoms, neither is your niece, Rosalind. We have arranged it between us, or rather your son and Mr. Harcourt have, which is just the same."

"What have you arranged, my dear?" asked the countess, blankly.

"That we will go to church in our travelling dresses and have a quiet breakfast afterwards and then go on our respective tours. 'You see,'" added Lady Hilda, confidentially, "I am determined to be married before my father is, so there is no time for bridesmaids and all that rubbish."

"That may be, my dear, and your plan has its own advantages," replied Lady Killbrook, dubiously, "but where do you propose going to when you return from church?"

"That is one of our difficulties," was the reply.

"I propose an hotel, at which papa is furious, and Lady Mabel wants us to go to her mite of a house in Mayfair, but I won't consent to that. Dunmow said you would be able to suggest something."

"Of course I can; you and Rosalind must be married from my house. She is my niece and you will be my daughter," said her ladyship, cordially.

After this the two ladies engaged in an animated consultation upon the subject of dress, a matter that even strong-minded women cannot quite ignore, and when this topic was somewhat exhausted Lady Killbrook went to make her call at the house so contemptuously spoken of in Mayfair.

Here she found our heroine calmly and quietly happy.

A trifle sad, it is true, at the tragical fate of Ned Milstead, which, however, she is doing her very best to forget. Wedding preparations in this house are to be seen from garret to basement. Girls may marry every day of the week, but it is not a daily occurrence for a widow of forty eight with a small income and no family influence to marry an earl with a rent roll such as that possessed by the Earl of Dacre, and Lady Mabel Marmion meant to celebrate the occasion with all the pomp and display that such an important event deserved.

"I should feel vexed at those girls being married in such a quiet way," she observed to her sister-in-law, when discussing the situation, "if it were not that Hilda is so troublesome. I suspect poor Dunmow will have his hands full with her."

"I don't think he is alarmed at the prospect," was the caustic reply.

Then the two ladies began to discuss details, Rosalind was called to give her opinion, and it was finally decided that the two young brides should meet their future husbands with their friends at the church, and when the ceremony was over they were to go to Lady Killbrook's house, where breakfast would be awaiting them.

So the wedding morning came, the last day in April, and the two brides, rivals in beauty, and once rivals in love, stood at the altar together.

Very lovely they both looked.

Rosalind in her fair blue-eyed, bright-haired

beauty, and Lady Hilda so darkly handsome and passionately beautiful.

Each bridegroom thought his own the fairest bride, though the many lookers-on were divided in opinion.

The Earl of Dacre gave his daughter away, and the Earl of Killbrook was equally generous with his niece; Lady Mabel Marmion behaved like a model of sweetness to both of the fair girls, and not a shadow came to cloud the brightness of their joy.

In such a scene the bridegrooms never seem of much importance, all interest is centred in the bride, and on this occasion it was not until they were leaving the church that many of the strangers present noticed that if the brides were lovely the bridegrooms were no less handsome.

The wedding breakfast which served to celebrate this double event differed in no way from other wedding breakfasts.

There were speeches made and replied to. Healths were proposed and drunk, it was a kind of mutual admiration assembly, and the two brides were scarcely missed when they slipped away from the table to prepare for their respective journeys.

No tender mother was there to take a smiling yet tearful farewell of them. For Rosalind was an orphan, and Lady Hilda thought somewhat bitterly that she was worse than motherless.

But the adieus were said at last, rice was showered on the departing brides, and now at last Harry Harcourt felt that the prize he had so long struggled for was won in very deed.

"Rosa, my own," he murmured, as he pressed her fondly in his arms. "The dream of my boyhood is fulfilled; the white rose is my wife."

She made no reply except to bury her face in his bosom—it was her haven of rest.

Two days after this Lady Mabel Marmion and the Earl of Dacre were married.

There was no attempt at privacy on this occasion.

Relatives, friends and acquaintances were invited from far and near.

It was Lady Mabel's day of triumph over those who had slighted her or had looked upon her doubtfully. Her triumph over fate she secretly thought it.

Superbly handsome she looked in her costly dress of pale lilac with its abundance of soft white lace, and very stately was the Earl of Dacre as he now in his declining years took unto himself a second wife.

He, poor man, had not been happy in his first marriage, and during his long widowhood his daughter could hardly have been regarded as an unmixed blessing.

What his future lot will be it is hard to say, but Lady Killbrook, who can scarcely be considered prejudiced in her sister-in-law's favour, believes that Lady Mabel will make him a good wife if only for her own sake.

We will hope she is right, for poor man, after all these years he needs a little comfort.

And now my tale is nearly told.
Marriage ends one phase of life for a man as well as for a woman.

For our hero the world lies wide before him. He has many battles to fight, many victories to win, perhaps many enemies to encounter, but he has succeeded in the one great purpose that from boyhood has been the mainspring of his life. He has "Bridged by his Love," the social chasm that divided him from the sweet girl to whom he had given his heart in the very spring time of his earliest youth.

Rosalind is his treasured wife, and to a man who thus succeeds all things are possible.

[THE END.]

Eight hundred varieties of pears, and nearly one hundred kinds of native grapes, are said to be in cultivation in America.



[IN SORE DISTRESS.]

SOUTHDOWN'S CASE.

WOULD it ever succeed? For ten long years things had gone from indifferent to bad, from bad to worse. Yet, seeing all the misery his persistence created, one might have said that it was man's innate cruelty to himself that prompted Matthew Southdown to court obstacle after obstacle, recognising the bitterness of each new difficulty, yet making little effort in the way of freeing himself by going away—by throwing aside as futile the endeavours which had so long proved fruitless, and which now budded no greater promise than they had ten years since.

But he was one of those men who believe in themselves, because they believe in the rights of individuals as opposed to the wrongs of sects. As you watched him now, bending over the loom, perplexed, and lost to all extraneous objects in deep thought—as you marked the lines on the too patient face, and the grey hairs that had come earlier than their season into the black mop upon his head—as you watched his careful, educated fingers poised over a little screw or a crank, you too felt a sort of enthusiasm borne in upon you, begot of the very stillness and profundity of the man.

The room was bare and poor, the few articles of furniture were meagre in the extreme. Over there in the corner by the window his wife, rocking the cradle with her foot, mended a rag

of clothing miraculously with a proud woman's deft needle, a woman who, though she might grieve to the utmost in private, and be pinched by the many pangs of want, yet maintained that look of carelessness before the world, and particularly before her own sex, that made her seem scornful and out of the reach of pity. Once or twice to-day, as she sat there and sewed and quieted her baby, she looked up at her husband's bowed form leaning over the loom. The thought came to her that the silence she had so long imposed upon herself was ridiculous, was unwomanly; she did not care for herself, but her baby—what were its prospects? She turned from her husband with a little shiver to look at the child. She had often to turn from her husband thus, and to look at the little face at her feet, to keep back the words of complaint and reproof that rose to her lips.

Still Matthew ought to know that Mr. Brown had called for the rent to-day and had gone away in ill-humour because he had not got it—that the grocer refused to speak to her this morning when she had met him because his bill remained unpaid.

No money in the house, Matthew out of work! How could things go on? She had put up with it for ten years; had buried the two little children that had come in that time with a sad-spirited feeling of something like relief that they had escaped a world of sorrow and pain, and that their tender little hands and feet would never know suffering again.

Yet, in all that time, Matthew had worked,

in a desultory way, to be sure, but it had been work, and although his fellow-workmen had called him a star-gazer, and their wives had laughed at him openly, yet it had not been quite as black as now it was.

Before this he had toiled at his scheme of perfecting his loom—a loom by which the work of ten might be done by one man; and of nights when the mill was closed he had worked and plotted and planned until midnight found him still engrossed in his labours.

And, although neglect necessarily became his wife's share, she had not demurred, because she knew that all his efforts were directed toward an ultimate, though vague, good for her, and her alone.

Still, when she found how she was not as other women, that her house was not a pleasant house to visit at, that her husband was esteemed below his deserts, she rebelled in the negative way of women, and had stayed away from all her neighbours and surroundings, and had taken on herself the duty of denying prying eyes the right to see.

But all had not then come! Only last month, when hands were discharged, her husband's employers had come to him and told him he must go.

"Am I not a good workman?" he had asked.

"Yes," they said.

"Do I not do my duty?"

"Yes."

"Then why should I go with these men who are the refuse of labour?"

"You are a communist," had said one of his employers; "you are working at a machine which you intend shall lower the standard of your fellow-workmen—you, a workman, would take the bread out of their mouths."

"Oh," he smiled, and left.

He went home in something like triumph, and told his wife—triumphant that his labour had raised him enemies.

For, he argued, if the thing was worth nothing nobody would have hated him for attempting it. She could not help a blenching as she listened any more than she could help a sort of admiration for him as he stood there before her so helpless, yet so confident.

For all that, though, she took to staying hour after hour beside her baby, crooning the little songs she had sung to the two other babies that had so soon gone to glory.

This baby, now, she did not wish to die. There was a fever in her, now that her husband had brought her to such dire straits something must be retained to keep her from going against him. She had gone then from house to house begging work. But the answer had been against her. So she had come back day after day, spiritless and borne down, yet uttering no complaint, until at last she stayed at home awaiting—she knew not what. To-day there was nothing to eat. The landlord had been for the hundredth time for his rent. Could she hold out much longer?

As she sat there her younger self came to her, and she saw, as all women see under the circumstances, that she did not deserve all this, and that she might have done better.

The bare room went away from her, the monotonous drip of the loom was gone; she suffered her mending work to drop into her lap, her foot paused, and after one or two furtive, gasping rocks the cradle resolved into quietude.

She saw gay faces around her. She had been a beautiful girl, now she was a beautiful, happy woman, proud and rich, her guests flattering, not a care was hers. In all her pride and glory of riches she looked up to her husband with a sort of shock and saw that this face bending over her, smiling and loving, was not Matthew's, and she wondered thus, if Matthew was happy, and if he ever thought of her.

She did not care though, for he had always been a visionary man, and she could not help it. Yet, somehow, it seemed that Matthew haunted her as she rested beside her husband, that richer man, who had wooed her.

With a start she came out of her reverie and

sighed, and saw Matthew over his loom as usual, and she took up her work again, but only to throw it down with a tired, worn-out feeling. She sat with her head pressed down upon her hands and did not know he was beside her until he touched her and she started up in affright.

"Matthew, how you startled me," she said, peevishly.

But he did not notice her tone; his face was white, his eyes burning.

"Lyddy," he said, "I think the end has come. I know what you are hiding from me."

She looked at him keenly, bitterly, remembering her reverie.

"I know Mr. Brown was here for his rent to-day," he went on, "and there was no money for him. I know there is nothing in the house to eat. What shall we do?"

"It is rather late to ask that question," she said, in a harsh voice, "you should have thought of it long ago. You know I have never complained all these years—that I have tried all I could to help you—that I did not do what other wives might have done."

"What is that?" he asked, quickly.

"Any other woman in my place would have dashed your models to pieces, and you would have waked to know that labour, and not dreaming, is the duty of a man."

"You would have killed me, Lyddy, had you done so."

"Oh! don't talk of killing," she went on, angry at his not showing any more feeling, angry at the sound of her own angry voice, "if it comes to that, I wonder what you think I am made of. Dear knows, there's being enough to kill me all these years."

"I know it, but I did for the best."

"Don't talk that way," she cried; "I am desperate enough without that when I think of what I am, and what I once was."

"Hush," he said, touching her arm, "I know what you once were."

She burst upon him then, taunting him, telling him he was no man to insult his wife and the mother of his children; that but for him she might have been a happy woman all this time. In all ways she poured upon him the venom of this long-hoarded-up wrath. She did not see him—she was blinded by her released energy.

When she had finished she stood trembling in every limb; and he was leaning on his loom again, his head down among the shuttles. She watched; he was motionless; she was frightened at what she had said.

"Matthew!"

He raised his head, and the change in his face made her cry out in sudden pain and fly to him.

"I have heard you," he said, "and I appreciate your truths. But, child, I never meant to insinuate anything that could hurt you when I said I remembered what you had been. I meant that in my mind you were always the pretty, laughing girl I knew when I was young, and that I had dreary pain enough to know that I had made you what you are. I know that you might have done better."

She might have done better! They were the very words of her reverie. She stood irresolute before him, half crazed by him and his manner—the manner of a man who intended to make no further effort in the world.

Then a cry came from the cradle. The baby in that cry had made her resolve on something great. She picked up the child and took it to him.

"Matthew, God forgive me for what I have said. But, wait! Here, hold Mark, and be frank with me." She did not cry—there was a new quality in her voice.

"Frank with you," he said.

"Yes. I have been silent too long. A little while ago I was thinking of myself as a young girl; and that led to all this outbreak. This is our crisis: I have passed it. The story of your loom and all your thoughts must be told to me. There is a purpose borne in upon me, and I am your partner now. Don't forgive me, or say that you did not mind what I said in anger, for that

would make me weak again. You remember the pearl cross upstairs?"

"The pearl cross—you have that yet?"

"Yes," she answered, hastily; "I know it should have gone long ago, but I kept it, for a foolish feeling too, and old times—you know my old lover gave it to me. I was thinking of him a little while ago."

She laughed nervously. He looked at her:

"It would have bridged over the pain of to-day, Lyddy," he said.

"I know, I know. But I do not want it bridged over. If it had not been for to-day, the future would have been less. I shall sell the cross. Don't I know of the lawsuit that is worrying you?"

He threw the child into her arms.

"Curse the man who told you!" he said, in wrath, and struck his hand upon the loom so sharply that she saw the stain of blood upon the needles.

"I was not told," she said, boldly; "I saw the papers in your pocket, and read them last night when you were asleep. Why did you keep this from me? You mistake when you think a husband who keeps his sorrow from his wife adds anything to the love he bears her. I am going to sell the cross—I shall leave you, and go with Mark to your sister in town for a week or so until after the lawsuit. Let it decide which way it will: if in your favour, you will be rich—if against you, you cannot be poorer."

"I cannot succeed, Lyddy, for money is required. If I lose—"

"Well?"

"Death," he cried, and she saw the bright light in his eyes again.

She hurried from him, she went out, and got money for her cross of pearls. She brought the money home.

"There is enough for you until after I come back," she said.

"And you will leave me? It is well perhaps," he added, bitterly, after a moment.

"Yes," she said, "you must think over everything—you must bear your new trials alone; only holding in view that, no matter how poor you are, or how distressed, you will never see me as you have to-day, and that henceforth I am a new woman."

It was evening now, and she sat down beside him, crooning to the child. And freed than ever before, in the freedom of exaggerated feeling on both sides, he told her all that she knew before, but which she was sensible enough to know was good for him to tell again.

She heard how his patent had been infringed upon, that if he could prove his title to this loom, which had taken so many years to perfect, the mill-owners of even foreign countries would recognise its excellence, inasmuch as all the workers, all the learned mechanics, were against him, and to beat him on their own ground naturally argued his own success. More, he told her; and she asked question after question, drawing in his answers that fire from his brain which her angry denunciation had made so dangerous. When all was told, and the darkness lay heavy in the room, he did not see her compressed lips and frowning face, so full of purpose.

"Can I hold you up in any wise, Matthew?" she said.

"No," he answered, kindly, "I am sure of my claim; but I am equally sure I shall fail."

"And yet it is best I should go away to Jane, so that you can be alone. You must not, after that unsuccessful trial, come home expecting to see me here anxious and waiting. I shall be nearer, Matthew; I shall be outside the court-house to meet you."

"Lyddy."

"Yes, I will—yes, I will. And you shall succeed—and Mark shall be a rich man."

Then by those adroit, wifely ways she absolutely imparted to him some of her own assumed hopes. Be it as it may, when she left him in the morning he smiled and kissed her and the child.

But when he had gone back again into the cheerless house the old depression was upon him, and desperation and death were very nigh.

And his wife carried with her a like depression and desperation, and she said in the train:

"Oh, my dear dead children, beg of the Saviour, who must love you now very well, seeing you have been with Him so long—beg of Him for mother, and father, and little brother."

Now about this time, or rather a little later, there came into the law-offices of Adam Abel, the great jurist, a closely-veiled lady. She waited in an ante-room until the great man had finished with a client. She had to sit there a full hour before her turn came.

When she entered the presence of the lawyer she looked at his well-kept person and heard his saucy tone.

She entered upon her case. She was deeply interested in weavers at present, as most of the world was, she was more interested perhaps because she had long ago been a weaver herself.

She had come for his services in a case which would shortly come up—a case which he doubtless had heard of, as all the place was ringing with it—that of an obscure weaver, one Matthew Southdown, who claimed various improvements and perfections in a loom, and which were denied him. Would Mr. Abel undertake the case?

Emphatically the learned man said no! That although the case promised to be a celebrated one, yet his health was so precarious that he would not undertake it, he was so bound down by many and pressing duties.

The lady insisted, she offered anything, everything; she had called on him on account of his eminence, and although he recommended other and skilful men she yet persisted.

At last he said that he would not, he could not, that the other side, represented by many proprietors of mills, had desired his services, but even to them he had turned a deaf ear.

"Will no money induce you?" she asked.

He smiled slightly.

"Money cannot induce me," he said.

She was silent for a little while.

"If there is nothing else, madame," he said, "I much regret to tell you that my time is rather precious."

She paid no attention to this.

"They say that where money is of no avail love can do much," she said, tremulously, and threw back her veil.

"Eve!" he cried, going toward her, "Eve Cain!"

"Yes, Eve Cain," she said, "your old sweetheart, Adam. What do you think of her in this new light? Time has dealt leniently with you; can I say as much for myself?"

"It is like a breath of old days to see you, to talk with you. Where are you stopping? Let me come and see you."

"Certainly," she laughed, "you may come to see me, but not before you promise me one thing."

"And that is?"

"To defend this man."

"Eve!"

"Yes, Eve Cain—I know all about the name. Don't I remember the old 'Foundling'—dear old Coram's Hospital for Children. Don't I remember how you and I were brought there by our poor, shamed mothers, whoever they were; and being both brought to the place on one day, we had bestowed upon us the wonderful names we bear? Don't I know that the babies there are named after persons, things animate and inanimate, after flowers, fish, fruit, all the things on earth, above and below the earth? Don't 'Adam Abel' and 'Eve Cain' prove how witty our sponsors were in giving our first—and in our case only known—parents their due of praise and blame? Don't I know how we grew and thrived; how we were always together as much as possible—how as time passed by we were both weavers—how emancipated at last you by a good stroke fell in with a lawyer who helped to make you what you are—how you came to me then and was my kind brother—"

"Not your brother, Eve, your lover."

"As you will," she said, falteringly; "only I was truthful to you, you know that."

"Yes. You told me that you could not love

me. You sent me away thus, and I never saw you again until this day."

"I am better now, Adam, than I was then; and I appreciate you more than then. Hush! not one word—I do not mean to say that I would force my claim upon you—I do not ask if in all this time you have seen a good girl whom you could love. I am interested in this man, this Matthew Southdown, his wife and child—it is life or death with them. You were a weaver—you know all that this man claims. Be interested in it—do not think that he would harm others—do not think that a loom run as his will make labour mean; it will elevate it, it will raise it to a science. Go down to him—see him—and his wife and child—see their poverty, and his earnest, true heart. Be with him, be with him, Adam, if for no other reason than that you refuse money; but do it for the love you once bore me: for love, I know, is more potent than all the wealth of the world."

In her intensity she had placed her hands upon his shoulders and was hungrily looking into his eyes. He was more nervous than he had thought possible, he, the calm, discreet, dispassionate man.

"I will come to you to-night," he said. And she put down her veil and went away.

Behold! a week from that time, the great Adam Abel gone from town, to recruit his health for a short sojourn in healthy air. Behold him in Matthew Southdown's meagre home sitting at the loom, weaving deftly, as in old times the 'Foundling' boy had woven.

"But your wife and child, Southdown," he said, "when do you expect them? You know I told you the party who sent me here spoke of them—the party who stipulates to be nameless, you know."

"Yes," answered Matthew; "but the fact is I wrote my wife of your being here—I wrote her that you had come down expressly to understand my claims, knowing so much about looms yourself, and that you worked with me—that you intended to have me make a model of my loom, and when you defended me in the suit you expect to have the model in court to exemplify. She seems to think her going away was providential, and it is the best for us to be alone together."

"There is something in that, for when I came here first you were that woe-begone and crazed; it was hard to get a sensible answer from you."

"The change is owing to you. Why, since it has been known you were to be on my side I've had letters even from mill-owners, all offering me money enough if I succeeded to make a rich man of me forthwith. And so sure as I get the money you shall have whatever you please."

"Nothing like that," said the lawyer, stopping the loom. "Remember, I did need relaxation, and my jaunt has benefited me already. Then if I gain the cause my success will be commensurate with your fortune. Besides, do you think that love can do what nothing else can?"

"Yes. For love of my wife I have done as I have all these years."

"Then don't let us speak of money; go on with your model."

Suddenly Matthew began to be looked upon with favour. Mr. Brown, the landlord, mended the fence and took care of the roof. And it was all because the great lawyer was here. The name of Abel was synonymous with success.

"But suppose I should fail, Southdown," said the lawyer.

"Oh, in that case I shall not be depressed again, for I shall know I can succeed some other time; but surely you would not take up a hopeless case."

"Surely not. I shall not fail, for love or money."

Another letter came to Matthew from his wife.

"I told you so," she wrote; "and I shall wait with Mark outside the court-house."

But the trial! All the village was excited, so was the town. Mill-owners sought lodgings even in Jane's house; and Lyddy thought it a great joke to entertain the enemies of her

husband—for she never for one instant dreamed of failure now. She talked to Mark, and showered untold wealth upon that innocent's head. She spoke, with tears in her eyes, of the two dead babies. "But you, Mark, shall live and be good on earth and comfort mother and father—poor father!—here in the world as Teddy and Billy will comfort us in God's beautiful house!"

She was nervous; she was frightened as the day of the trial came on.

"Oh, Mark," she said, "that Eve Cain deserves her name I do believe."

She had a letter from her husband full of many trust and love. If he failed now he would go to work for her and the little one, and wait for better things. He had grown healthier in body and mind both. He was glad she was away, for, should he lose, the joy of meeting her once more would pay for any disappointment he could possibly have.

She thought the letter was nervous because she wanted it to be so. She was astonished at one thing though—he never mentioned Mr. Abel in it at all.

Meantime Eve Cain, that strangely interested woman, received a letter about this time from Adam Abel:

"Be in court and hear me plead," it said.

And here was the court and here was the dreadful crowd—and here was Matthew Southdown, looking splendid and manly. And people fled to saying, "Thathead," and rather believing there was something in him. For although he was pale he was calmer than he had ever been in his life before—that was Mr. Abel's fault.

Here was Mr. Brown. He said he always took an interest in his tenants, that was why he had come. Here was the grocer, rather lively, in a red tie. He said he had served Mr. Southdown with "groceries" for years. Here were workmen, and mill hands, and rich proprietors, and even men of science.

But where was Adam Abel? Oh, he was in a back room waiting for a lady. In came the lady heavily veiled, carrying a baby.

"Eve, I am glad to see you," he said. "Is this Southdown's child?"

"Yes," she said, all of a tremble.

Then he turned to the pale little woman beside her.

"Is this Southdown's wife?" he asked.

"Of course she is a Southdown, or she wouldn't be here," she said. And the little woman blushed. And when she took Mark he almost split his head open on a chair-back.

"She's not used to babies," said Eve, candidly.

"She is not," he said, "and a mother?"

"Of course," snapped she, while the little woman blushed more than ever. Then he left.

Will anyone ever forget the scene in court that day? There was the model of the loom—there was the learned jurist manipulating it. There were the eager crowd of faces and the bated breaths.

"He went all the way down to Southdown's to learn it," said a man. "He expects to get a fortune for his fee," said another.

The trial went on. In the back room one little woman held open the door to catch a buzz from the court-room.

"Oh! I can't," she said, and sat down and buried her face in her hands.

"Neither can I," said Eve Cain, and used Mark for a handkerchief.

How long it lasted; would it ever end? Oh, listen, listen. What is that cry? Is it joy or what? The audience have clear forgotten where they are—they are shouting, they are hurrahing for somebody. Listen! it is louder and louder. Oh! God be thanked. Mark, it is for Matthew Southdown; your case is won, your little brothers up in the streets in the sky must hear that shout and be very glad, very glad. Oh, only listen. Open the door, Eve Cain! No matter, only open the door; the other woman would, but you know she can't.

Here is some one coming—the door opens—here is Adam Abel, and he is dragging Matthew Southdown with him.

With a great cry Eve Cain throws herself into the lawyer's arms and kisses him.

"God bless you," she says.

"Love won," says he, and then he looks around. "Southdown is here. He wanted to go outside to find his wife, but I told him she was here. I brought him to thank his benefactress. Man, don't you see your wife and child?"

"Yes," said Matthew, faintly—but not so faintly but Eve Cain rushed to him, hugging his great frame to her.

"Oh! Matthew, Matthew," she cried, "oh! my dear, my dear!"

"I did not know you knew each other," said Mr. Abel, lost in astonishment.

"Forgive me, Adam," she cried, "forgive me! This is my husband."

"Eve."

"Not Eve, but Lyddy—Matthew called me Lyddy for his mother when he married me."

"And this—who is this?"

"Oh, that is Jane, Matthew's sister, and this is Mark. Oh! Matthew, tell him all, tell him all, for I—"

"I knew it all from the first. Lyddy has told me all her life," said Matthew, "and I was perfectly silent and grateful. How did I know, Mr. Abel, that you were in the dark when you refused to tell me who the lady was who had got you to defend me—when I knew all the time? Your pearl cross did so much before; for it took Lyddy to you, it made her remember you. And then I knew that you were already married."

"Married?" cried Lyddy, almost a little disappointed, as was but natural.

"Yes," said Mr. Abel, "and here is my wife, who knows my story from beginning to end."

"Father Adam, you are famous," said the new lady, kissing him, and turning to thank Lyddy for it all; "for he thought the world of you once on a time," said she.

"Before he met you, madame," said Jane, who had been crying all the time.

"Of course, before he met me," said Mrs. Abel, quickly, and turned to thank Lyddy again for having prevailed upon her husband to undertake the case—such a celebrated case.

"Oh, Matthew," said Lyddy, "hold me tight—hold Mark too—and Jane too, for I have found that money is nothing, but love is all."

"You have won now," said Adam Abel.

"Oh—h—h—h!" wailed Mark, which made them all understand things as they ought to be—for a pin was in the dear child.

All the same, it was in this way that "Southdown's Case" made so many people celebrated, and revolutionised Eve Cain out of Lyddy and Mark, although there were people mean enough to say that Lyddy's deception had done more than anything else.

FACETIAE.

A DINNER PARTY AT THE SQUIRE'S.

YOUNG SNOBJOY (to hard-drinking country doctor, who has been occupying the attention of the ladies all the evening, wherefore Snobjoy is jealous): "Oh, by-the-bye, doctor, I saw a case to-day you would have taken charge of."

DOCTOR (condescendingly): "Oh, Ah! Indeed, what was it?"

YOUNG SNOBJOY: "A case of port?"

[And the doctor's voice was heard no more that night.]

WHEN is an admiral at sea like a London gamin late for dinner?—When he's ranning over the flags.

THE rumour of the attempted poisoning of the Czar by the imperial cooks is contradicted. We suppose at Michaelmas His Majesty, like everybody else, had his goose cooked; hence the mistake about trustworthy source, and the consequent stuffing of the public.

The National Health Society has appointed a Fog and Smoke Committee, which has held a meeting, presided over by Mr. Ernest Hart

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We congratulate the movers on their choice of a chairman, for the subject is one which should be taken up earnestly and Hartily. We hope to goodness they will be able to put down foggs—by Act of Parliament if necessary—but we much fear it will all “end in smoke.”

—Moonshine.

ON THE FIRE.

BOOKING CLERK: “No tickets to-day, sir?”

LITTLE JIMES: “Why not?”

B. C.: “There’s a heavy swell on.”

L. J.: “Well, if there is a heavy swell on I suppose he don’t want the whole boat himself?”

—Moonshine.

“TRAIN UP A CHILD,” &c.

STRICT PARENT: “You shall not go to Mrs. Omnim’s party to-night. I don’t approve of her set, or her manners, or her morals. In short, I’ve written to her saying you are in bed and very ill.”

DUTIFUL DAUGHTER: “Yes, mamma. And as I’ve got my things on, mightn’t I as well take the note over and give it to Mrs. Omnim myself?”

—Moonshine.

NOT SUCH AN EASY MATTER.—To pass in a crowd.

—Moonshine.

Of which large-sized and useful dog does an unbending maternal relative always remind one? Why, of a ma-stiff, of course.

—Moonshine.

“OUR GUILDED YOUTH.”—The Junior Liverymen.

—Funny Folks.

“TALL” TALK.

The “march of refinement” has now progressed so far that a man is no longer said to “ride the high horse,” he “equestrianizes the lofty steed.”

—Funny Folks.

CANDID.

“WHY do you indulge in this excessive dressing?” said a friend to the gorgeous Sarah. “Why?” was the answer. “Is it not obvious? The critics protest that I am *passée*; yet I am popular as ever.” “I see,” rejoined the candid friend, “people do not come now to see what you are, but what you wear!”

—Funny Folks.

A FAUX “PA.”—One who adopts a child.

—Funny Folks.

“THE LARGEST CIRCULATION IN THE WORLD.”—That of postage-stamps.

—Funny Folks.

THE PARADISE OF THE INSOLVENT IRISH TENANT.—The county of May-ewe.

—Funny Folks.

“MATCH-MAKERS.”—Cricketing teams.

—Funny Folks.

A BOOTIFUL IDEA.

The latest invention for resisting snow and rain is a boot made entirely from crocodile leather. Query—Has the crocodile boot any connection with the alli-gaiter?

—Funny Folks.

A NOISY NATION.—A “deto-nation.”

—Funny Folks.

The older a sparkling coquette or a fashionable belle grows the more matchless she becomes.

The most disagreeable month to a soldier—A long March.

“KEEP to the write,” said the lawyer to his lazy clerk.

The amount of pin-money required by a married lady depends altogether upon whether she uses diamond-pins or rolling-pins.

It is said that the ordinary life of a bee is ninety days. The end of a bee, however, is very lively.

A GENEROUS TRIUMPH.

“WHAT’S wrong between you and Smythe, that you don’t speak?”

“Haw! Fact is, we were both wivals for the hand of the same young lady—a celebrated beauty, you know—and, well, I don’t want to wag, but I got the best of it. Poor Smythe!”

“My dear fellow, a thousand congratulations!”

“Thanks awf’ly! We both proposed last week, you know, and she accepted—a—jim!”

—Punch.

INQUISITIVE SISSEY.

MA, what’s “epidermis”?

That, darling, a term is

Identical nearly with cuticle;

Otherwise skin, dear.

Which people foam India.

Narrate how mosquitoes there do tickle.

—Fun.

FOUR RINGS.

UPON a lovely summer evening,

Beneath a spreading willow shade,

There stands in rustic, childish beauty,

An urchin and a tiny maid.

Around her plump and dimpled finger,

With bashful looks and blushes red,

While on her face his blue eyes linger,

He ties a scarlet woollen thread.

When three short happy years have flown,

Again beneath the tree they stand;

A ring of blue beads strung on wire,

The lad has placed upon her hand.

And says, “Now don’t remove it, Lily,

For I have made a wish for you,

About a certain boy named Willie,

And I shall know if it comes true.”

Once more I see them, youth and maiden,

Beneath the spreading willow boughs;

A lover’s tender kiss is given,

And there are whispered lovers’ vows.

A ring of purest gold he gives her,

Saying, “My love shall never stray.”

Then, with a fond embrace, he leaves her,

To seek his fortune far away.

And now I see them as they enter

The sacred door of wedded life.

A costly diamond ring he gives her,

And fondly, proudly calls her wife.

Oh, may love’s presence with them linger,

When youth and childhood both have fled,

The wedding-ring upon her finger,

Once circled by the scarlet thread. M.

STATISTICS.

During the year from April, 1879, to April, 1880, the quantity of salt produced in Germany amounted to thirteen and a half million cwt., of which only three million cwt. were mineral salt, although the mineral salt mines are almost inexhaustible, those of Stosaufer measuring 125 English square miles, and 5,000 feet deep.

The strength of six English-speaking religious bodies is estimated in round numbers as follows: Episcopalians, 17,750,000; Methodists, 14,000,000; Roman Catholics, 12,500,000; Presbyterians, 10,000,000; Baptists, 8,000,000; Congregationalists, 7,000,000.

IRON PRODUCTION.—The secretary of the American Iron and Steel Association reports 697 blast-furnaces in the States, with an annual producing capacity of 6,500,000 tons of pig iron; 882 rolling-mills, with an annual capacity of 4,000,000 tons, the capacity of the rail-mills

being 2,150,000 tons; 11 Bessemer steelworks, with an annual capacity of 1,750,000 tons, and 11,880 miscellaneous works.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE.—One pint milk, three-quarters pound sugar, one-half box gelatine. Put these together and set over a kettle of boiling water; after the gelatine is dissolved, beat four eggs and stir in. Leave over the fire until it looks clear, then let it cool. Beat to a stiff froth one pint cream, then add vanilla to taste. Stir all well together, and set in a cool place with ice or snow around it. When you add the eggs stir thoroughly all the time, and when it is cool give it a hard beat. Put cake in a mould stuck together with white of egg, and put the liquid inside, or serve the cake and liquid separately.

ALMOND PUDDING (with sauce).—A large cupful of finely-minced suet, a teacupful of milk, four ounces of bread-crumbs, four ounces of well-cleaned currants, two ounces of almonds, half a pound of stoned raisins, three well-beaten eggs and the whites of other two, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon, and a small glass of rum. Butter a shape, and place part of the raisins neatly in rows. Blanch the almonds; reserve half of them to be placed in rows between the raisins just before serving. Mix all the remaining ingredients well together, put into shape, and boil for three hours. **THE SAUCE.**—One teaspoonful of milk and yolks of two eggs, well beaten, and some sugar—to taste; put on the fire, and stir till it just comes to the boil; then let it cool. When lukewarm stir into it a glass of sherry or currant wine, and serve in a sauce tureen; this sauce is a great improvement to the pudding.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AN ARAB LEGEND.—The feet of pigeons are red because their ancestors walked in the red mud which settled upon the face of the earth after the deluge.

The death is announced at Newton, near Hyde, of an old woman named French. She was reputed to be 104 or 105 years of age. She leaves a daughter upwards of 80 years of age.

The “championfaster,” as the Americans have dubbed Dr. Tanner, is coming to England. The doctor will make a tour of the great English and Scotch towns. In Scotland, in particular, he expects a hearty welcome.

There was launched the other day from the ship-building works of Messrs. Harland and Wolff, Belfast, a vessel named the British Queen, built entirely of steel. Her length is 410 feet, her beam 39 feet, and the tonnage is 3,500 tons gross register.

At the gambling establishments of Monte Carlo the police have strict orders to search the grounds every night for the bodies of suicides, and to remove them as quickly as possible, so that visitors may not be shocked by discovering their remains.

WHAT can be achieved by a handful of people in a new country is perhaps nowhere shown more remarkably than in Australia, where a population of only two million people has a total export and import trade of over 100 millions.

A STORY went the rounds of the papers the other day how an attendant at the Royal Courts of Justice picked up in a corner of a passage some bonds of the value of £3,000 payable to bearer, found out the owners, restored the bonds, and was rewarded with £1! and much comment has been made on the grand encouragement thereby given to honesty. But the best part of the story has not been told. The £1 was distributed among all the servants who are employed in the building, so that the original finder of the £3,000 eventually received only ninepence.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS are informed that no charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

A. T. S.—It has been decided that a bill of sale given after the Bills of Sale Act, 1878, if not attested by a solicitor is void as between the giver of the bill and the lender of the consideration money.

INTERROGATION.—Sound health is most likely to be obtained by temperance in all things. Between use and abuse lies the happy medium.

A LONG SUBSCRIBER.—We cannot recommend any particular firm. Take a directory and make a selection from amongst the numerous importers of suchlike American goods.

A. B.—The eldest son of the Prince of Wales.

L. H.—Apply at one or more of the many shipping companies' offices to be found in the City.

ALFRED.—To clean white feathers dissolve some fine white soap in boiling soft water, and add a small piece of pearl ash. When the water is just cool enough for the hand to bear it pass the feathers several times through it, squeezing them gently with the hand. Repeat the same process with a weaker solution of soap, and then rinse the feathers in cold water, beating them across the hand to expel the water; when they are nearly dry draw each fibre or fine across the edge of a blunt knife, turning it round in the direction you wish the curl to take; then, if the feather is to be flat, place it between the leaves of a book to press it.

J. H.—If you could tell us the title of the piece of poetry required we could look through our Indices for it.

ELIZA.—1. If your husband died intestate you would be entitled to only a third of the property left. 2. Should the mother of your husband become chargeable to the parish your husband could be compelled to keep her, or contribute to the best of his power.

SO FAIR HER FACE.—In every district you may find one, from whom all particulars may be had.

JEWEL.—Wash the hands in a small quantity of oil of vitriol and cold water without soap.

QUEEN BESS.—1. The methods of cleaning lace vary slightly according to the nature and quality of the material. After having carefully washed and rinsed, however, if you wish to darken the colour somewhat, a weak solution of coffee will effect the desired colour. 3. Writing very good.

T. D.—We might give you the address of a composer of music if we knew what you wanted it for. Perhaps some teacher or organist in your own vicinity would answer your purpose.

W. H. P.—Inquire of some fibre merchant.

AMELIA B.—“Kismet” means destiny; “whilom” means formerly.

CONSTANT READER.—1. Have nothing to do with such people—they are quacks. 2. Under the heading “No Signature” we last week referred to a work published by Ward and Lock with the title “Artistic Homes; or How to Furnish with Taste,” price one shilling. This may be the book you seek.

CONSTANT READER.—1. A course of wormwood tea—a wineglassful two or three times a day—is often very beneficial in affections of the skin arising from some functional disorder and producing “spots.” 2. Ink may be removed from the fingers by wetting the stained part with water and rubbing a little oxalic acid over it. For the linen stains dissolve a teaspoonful of oxalic acid in a teacupful of hot water and rub well with the solution.

C. H. and B. F.—Declined with thanks.

SEVERAL CORRESPONDENTS have written to us respecting a paragraph recently inserted about the profits derivable respectively from the breeding of rabbits and sheep. We took the paragraph as an interesting item of information from, as stated, a contemporary, and we are therefore unable to furnish the writer's name and address, or give further particulars.

G. T. S.—One of the best things to give a horse after he has been driven is a quart of oatmeal stirred into a pail of water. It refreshes and strengthens him, relieves his immediate thirst, and prepares his stomach for more solid food.

NELLIE, MARIE and ALICE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Nellie is twenty-three, medium height, fair, domesticated, fond of home. Marie is nineteen, medium height, dark, brown eyes, fond of home and music. Alice is twenty, short, fair, domesticated. Respondents must be between twenty-two and thirty.

N. P. and G. F., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. N. P. is twenty-two, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing. G. F. is twenty, medium height, fair, brown eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of music.

ANNA and ANNIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Anna is twenty-six, short, dark, brown hair and eyes, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Annie is twenty-three, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music.

MA COUSINE et MON MEME would like to correspond with a young lady and gentleman living in the south of Ireland. Ma Cousine is nineteen, tall, fair, handsome, of a loving disposition. Mon Meme is twenty-one, tall, dark. Respondents must speak French—the lady nineteen, the gentleman between nineteen and twenty-four.

SWEET LITTLE NAN.

O'er flower-strewn track the mind runs back,
Recalled from these accustomed ways,
To roam again, with joy or pain,
Through hallowed scenes of early days.
The hills and trees that childhood sees,
The background of uncultured thought,
By memory's skilful touches will
Lure life's foreground soon be brought.

But dull to me would landscape be,
However rich with beauty stored,
If Love could not recall the spot
Where dwelt the one my heart adored.
And when again the verdant plain
In meditative mood I scan
Naught in the place takes on such grace
As she—my own sweet little Nan!

I mind me how I left the plough
To help her o'er the rustic fence,
And when I plead for kiss, she fled,
Or kept me in a sweet suspense.
So slight and small was she, while tall
And strong was I as any man,
It seemed but right that I should fight
The battle of sweet little Nan.

Upon my knee contentedly
She used to sit when work was done;
And if e'er sent abroad, I went
As escort and as champion.
I cannot tell when first the spell
Came o'er my heart, and I began
To feel Love's glow, and truly know
How dear to me was little Nan.

But she grew shy, and so did I,
Were awkward in our words and ways,
And could not meet, or fondly greet
Each other as in former days.
I could not sleep, or eat, or keep
My mind intent on any plan,
So lost was I in wondering why
Such change came o'er sweet little Nan.

The truth once learned, each heart discerned
The ripening of a hoier flame,
And all the joy of girl and boy
Dull in comparison became.
The years have sped since we were wed,
And I, an old grey-headed man,
Can ne'er forget where first I met,
And learned to love sweet little Nan. J. P.

L. P. and C. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. L. P. is short, dark, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition. C. H. is tall, dark, of a loving disposition, domesticated. Respondents must be between twenty-two and twenty-three, of a loving disposition.

RIFLE LARGE GRAIN and SHELL LARGE GRAIN, two bluejackets in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Rifle Large Grain is twenty-three, medium height, dark, hazel eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of music and dancing. Shell Large Grain is twenty-four, medium height, fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children.

ZILLAH THE GIPSY, twenty-three, tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be good-looking.

MASARDO, SNAKE CHARMER, AGONY, ROBIN, LONG HOOKY, MOPING KITIE, EAT-O, BOB THE DEVIL, BILL SHIFE, SHOVEL ENGINEER, NOUNDS, and DOG'S NOSE, twelve seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with twelve young ladies with a view to matrimony. Masardo is twenty-three, tall, light hair, blue eyes, fond of home and dancing. Agony is nineteen, tall, dark eyes, fair, fond of dancing. Robin is eighteen, fair, handsome, fond of dancing. Long Hokey is twenty, tall, fair. Moping Kitie is twenty-four, fair, blue eyes, handsome. Eat-O is nineteen, dark, hazel eyes, curly hair, fond of music and dancing. Bob the Devil is nineteen, medium height, auburn hair, blue eyes. Bill Shife is eighteen, tall, red hair, grey eyes, fond of dancing. Shovel Engineer is thirty, medium height, hazel eyes, fond of home and children. Nounds is twenty-four, medium height, grey eyes, fond of children. Dog's Nose is fifty-one, tall.

ISABELLA IRENE and ILMA JANETTE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-five. Isabella Irene is eighteen, tall, dark, grey eyes, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music. Ilma Janette is nineteen, tall, fair, domesticated. Respondents must be between twenty-two and thirty.

MAGGIE, JEANNIE and MAIDIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen in the Royal Navy. Maggie is eighteen, dark, fond of home. Jeannie is eighteen, fair, grey eyes, fond of music and dancing. Maidie is seventeen, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Respondents must be between twenty-two and twenty-three.

BOW FENDER, twenty-two, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

JOLLY FORE TOPMAN, nineteen, auburn hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen.

MIDSHIP ROLLOCK, twenty, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty.

INNER BOYSTAR, twenty-one, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty.

BLACK-EYED SUE and SAUCY PUSS, two friends, would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy. Black-Eyed Sue is twenty-three, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Saucy Puss is eighteen, medium height, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and dancing. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-four, good-looking.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

EVELYN is responded to by—Ethyl, twenty, fair, blue eyes, good-looking.

FLOTSAM by—Alma, eighteen, medium height, fair, fond of home.

MAUDE by—James B.

MABEL by—John B.

LILA by—William S.

FLORA by—George L.

HANDSOME LEONARD by—Irene, twenty, tall, fond of home and children.

LOVELY JOSEPH by—Clytie, twenty-three, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

LOU by—Jack, medium height.

ROSE by—Jim, tall, of a loving disposition.

DASHING DUNBAR by—Delta, tall, fair, blue eyes.

LAMBRO by—Madcap Violet, dark hair and eyes.

LIN by—Richard, nineteen, tall, good-looking, of a loving disposition.

JIM B. by—Nellie.

G. H. T. by—Rose.

WILL TRUELOVE by—Snowdrop, nineteen, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes, of a loving disposition.

LUCK by—Paul.

MARGARET by—Tom, twenty-four, dark, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

ADA by—Dan, twenty-three, medium height, fair, fond of home and children.

S. S. A. by—ANNIE K., twenty, medium height, fair.

MADELINE by—A. C. W., twenty-two, fair, blue eyes, fond of music.

LIZZIE by—J. W.

KINGFISHER J. by—Kate, nineteen, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

ANNIE by—J. P. W., tall, good-looking.

LOCK by—Lily, medium height, dark hair, brown eyes.

BARREL by—Louise, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

STOCK by—Ethel, short, fair, blue eyes.

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